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ABSTRACT

This resource guide contains lessons, suggested activities, and 54 individual student activity sheets for using editorial cartoons in the classroom. Editorial cartoons, at their best, are well-thought out arguments about important issues in the news. They are meant to provoke thought, not merely assert a position and, as such, they engage the reader actively in a debate. Editorial cartoons make use of many of the ideas and concepts of the social studies curriculum. Any good editorial cartoon is made up of a complex code of symbols, shadings, caricature, line, and other elements that require skill at deciphering. Words play a part, but only in relation to the visual elements. The materials in this resource guide aim at instructing students to "read" the language that editorial cartoons use. The lessons are organized in nine sections: (1) "Understanding the Cartoon's Main Idea"; (2) "Analogy and Symbol--Illustrating the Intangible"; (3) "Humor and Irony"; (4) "Exaggeration and Understatement"; (5) "Caricature and Stereotype"; (6) "Captions and Other Words"; (7) "Drawing and Design"; (8) "Literary and Historical References"; and (9) "History and the Editorial Cartoon." Each section includes a statement of an instructional object; a brief essay on the nature and importance of a single aspect of editorial cartooning; six lesson activities arranged in a sequence of increasing difficulty. Sample editorial cartoons are included. (MM)

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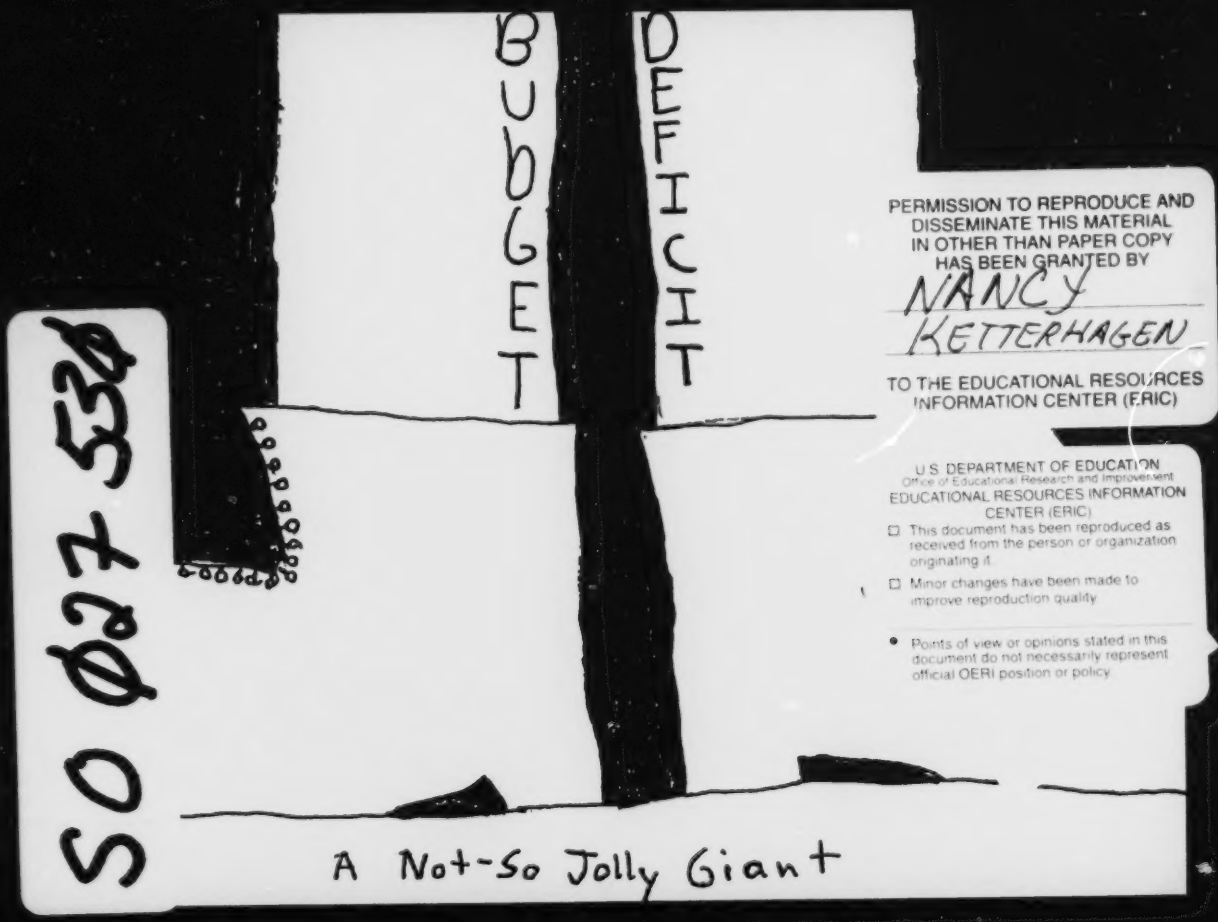
UNDERSTANDING AND CREATING EDITORIAL CARTOONS

A RESOURCE GUIDE



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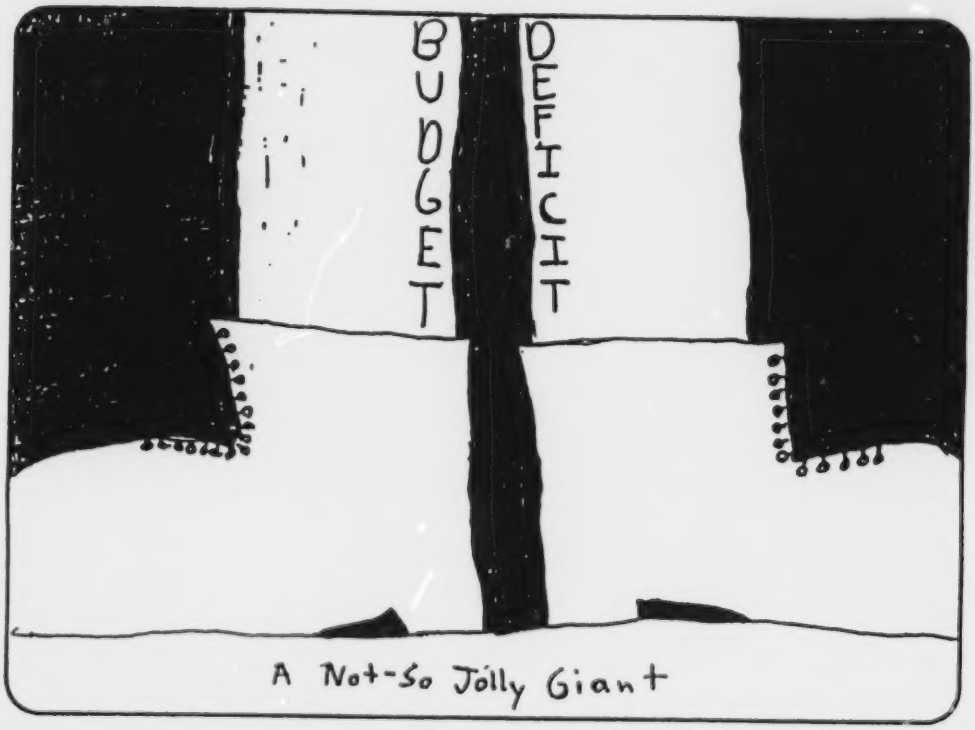

Using Editorial Cartoons to Teach Social Studies Skills

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The Editorial Cartoon as a Teaching Tool

This resource guide contains 54 individual student activity sheets and a great many other suggestions for using editorial cartoons in the classroom.

While this guide should help your students learn to draw their own editorial cartoons, that isn't our main objective in making it available. If it were, we would have included much more material on artistic technique. Instead, this guide is primarily designed to help you use editorial cartoons as a teaching tool. We believe that such cartoons can be used to achieve many of the major objectives of any history, government, or other social studies course.

Editorial cartoons are a unique way to present ideas. Obviously, they are expressions of opinion. But a political slogan on a sign or a poster is also an expression of opinion. Editorial cartoons, at their best, are much more. They are often well-thought-out arguments about important issues in the news. And they are meant to provoke thought, not merely assert a position. As such, they engage the reader actively in a debate. Editorial cartoons make use of many of the ideas and concepts of the social studies curriculum. And they assume in the reader an understanding of and ability to apply these ideas and concepts.

For example, many editorial cartoons include historical figures, important historical events, or famous sayings that relate the past to the present in complex and subtle ways. Others assume knowledge of geography, economics, international relations, government and more. Most editorial cartoons implicitly theorize about cause-and-effect relationships among events and trends. They certainly force the reader to sharpen skills at spotting bias. And they call on those readers to use their knowledge of society to form their own opinions, make judgments, and take action as citizens.

In other words, in a unique, pleasing, and visual form, editorial cartoons can foster all the important intellectual skills social studies teachers want to develop in their students.

Some of the most cleverly executed editorial cartoons appear to be very simple. But learning to understand and create these cartoons is no easy task. Any good editorial cartoon — even a very simple one — is made up of several elements. To fully understand such cartoons requires skill at deciphering a complex code of symbols, shadings, caricature, line, and much more. Words play a part, but only in relation to the visual elements. With the help of the materials in this resource guide, your students will learn to "read" the language that editorial cartoons use. And through the activities in each section, they can learn to use this language to express their own insights about the important issues affecting all of us as citizens of the nation and the world.

Jonathan Burack

Jonathan Burack
Editor-in-Chief
NewsCurrents Current Events Program

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SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

This resource guide is divided into nine sections. Each section deals with one aspect of editorial cartooning. The sections are as follows:

1 **UNDERSTANDING THE CARTOON'S MAIN IDEA**	**2** **ANALOGY AND SYMBOL — ILLUSTRATING THE INTANGIBLE**	**3** **HUMOR AND IRONY**
4 **EXAGGERATION AND UNDERSTATEMENT**	**5** **CARICATURE AND STEREOTYPE**	**6** **CAPTIONS AND OTHER WORDS**
7 **DRAWING AND DESIGN**	**8** **LITERARY AND HISTORICAL REFERENCES**	**9** **HISTORY AND THE EDITORIAL CARTOON**

EACH SECTION CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING:

— *A definition of an instructional objective.*

— *A brief essay on the nature and importance of a single aspect of editorial cartooning. You may use the comments in this essay as a guide for a teacher-directed discussion. Student and professionally drawn editorial cartoons illustrating the points in the essay are included in an easy-to-reproduce form.*

— *Six individual student activity sheets, also in an easy-to-reproduce form. Although no grade level is assigned, the activities in each section appear in approximate order of increasing difficulty. The simpler ones, however, may be quite appropriate for students who are also able to use the more advanced ones.*

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THE MAIN IDEA

OBJECTIVE:

The activities in this section are designed to help your students understand the editorial cartoon as a unified, visual expression of a single opinion or idea about a public issue in the news. These activities are also designed to help students improve their ability to identify the main idea in any complicated message.

COMMENTS

An editorial cartoon exists to make a point about some issue in the news. The very first thing students must realize about drawing editorial cartoons is the need to start with a SINGLE, CLEAR IDEA. You do not have to be a great artist to draw an effective editorial cartoon. But you DO need to understand the issue you are addressing, and you must know precisely what point you wish to make about that issue.

The most common problem with student editorial cartoons is a lack of clarity about the cartoon's point. All too often, a necessary element is missing, or an unnecessary (and distracting) element is present - NOT because the student is a poor artist, but because that student is not really clear about what the cartoon's point is. It is very important for a student to think through the issue he or she is going to illustrate before drawing anything.

In one sense, it is probably easy to state the main idea of most editorial cartoons. **Cartoon #1** is obviously about the problem of violence in American. It's possible to be even more specific and say it is about how terrified Americans have become about street crime.

But even this more narrowed-down statement isn't what we mean when we talk about the main idea of a cartoon. What we have in mind is a single statement that takes into account ALL of the cartoon's unique elements, a statement that sums up what that cartoon, as opposed to all others, is uniquely saying. After all, the phrase "Americans are frightened about street crime," could apply equally to **Cartoon #2.**

Students should learn to state a cartoon's main idea or point in a way that accounts for ALL of that cartoon's elements - and that distinguishes that cartoon from all others. For each cartoon DOES differ from every other one, however subtly. And it is in those differences that the cartoon's real message is contained.

The best cartoons are not literal. This is a point you will want to stress over and over to your students. If a cartoon were literal (If for example it could be completely summed up in some direct statement such as, "Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms may not work."), what would be the point of turning that literal statement into a cartoon? It is the visual medium that allows the cartoonist to tease the viewer with an idea, and to force the viewer to use his or her imagination.

Try to write a one-or-two sentence definition of the point that each of the two cartoons above is making. But be sure the definition you give for one cartoon can't be mistaken as a definition for the other. This exercise should convince you that editorial cartoons are only superficially "simple" art forms. And you'll see the importance of identifying the one central idea at the heart of each cartoon.

MACNELLY Chicago Tribune
HI THERE! WE'RE DOING ANOTHER SPECIAL ON VIOLENCE IN AMERICA— AS A PUBLIC SERVICE, OF COURSE...
TV

CARTOON #1

CARTOON #2

Find an editorial cartoon in your newspaper. Attach it here. Then answer the questions below.

Name of the cartoonist _____

_____

_____

Name of the newspaper _____

_____

_____

In one sentence, explain the problem the cartoon is about. _____

_____

_____

UNDERSTANDING THE CARTOON'S MAIN IDEA—ACTIVITY #2

A newspaper headline is meant to tell the main idea of the story. Clip a news story that interests you and attach it to this sheet. Now use the story's headline as a caption for a cartoon. Draw a cartoon here to fit with that headline caption.

Look through the newspaper for news stories about important events in the nation or the world. Pick five of these stories. Circle what seems to be the single most important sentence in each story. Now choose one of those stories. Attach it here. In the space provided, use the single sentence as a cartoon caption and draw a cartoon illustrating the main idea of the news story.

Understanding the Cartoon's Main Idea—Activity #4

Find an editorial cartoon in your daily newspaper. Attach the cartoon here and answer the questions below.

Name the artist who drew the cartoon, the newspaper in which it appeared, and the date on which it appeared. _____

_____

_____

What is the cartoon's subject? That is, what issue, news story, or problem is the cartoon about? _____

_____

_____

_____

In a brief paragraph, explain the main point the cartoon is making about its subject. _____

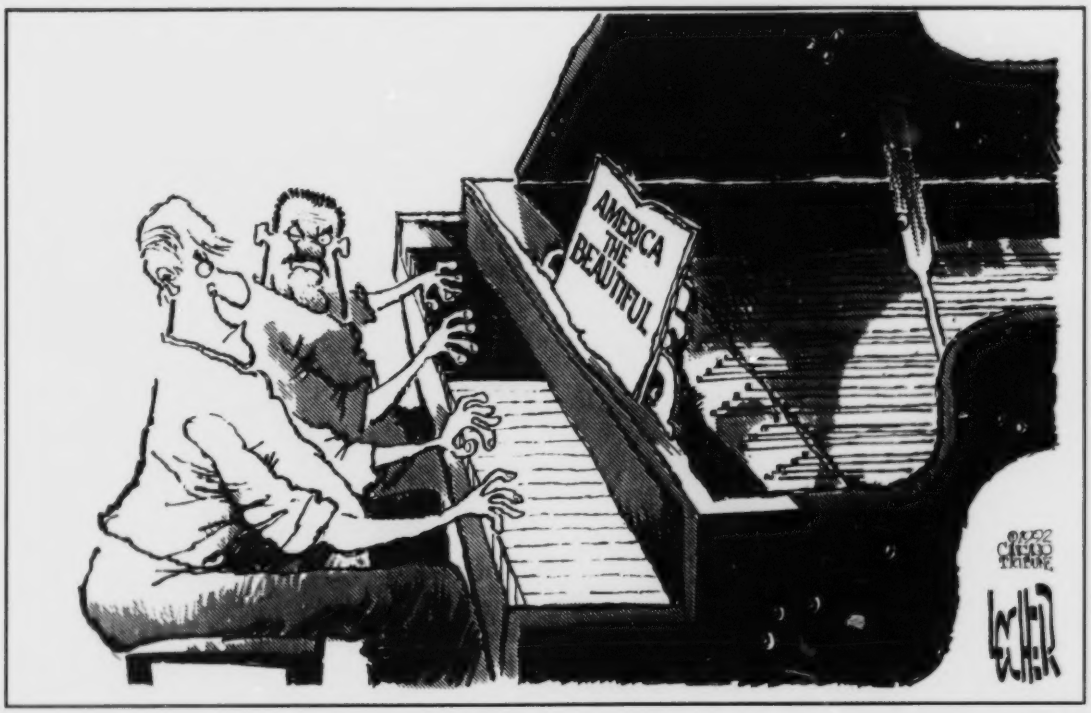
_____

_____

_____

Understanding the Cartoon's Main Idea—Activity #5

With the best cartoons, the main idea is rarely stated directly and obviously in words, either as a title or a caption or in any other way. If it were, the viewer wouldn't have to think about the visual elements in the cartoon. By themselves, the words in this cartoon do NOT express the cartoon's main idea. To understand that idea you need to look closely at all elements of the cartoon. After studying the cartoon, answer the questions about it listed below.



In a sentence or two, what is the cartoon's main point? _____

_____

_____

How do the piano keys help to make that point in an ironic way? _____

_____

_____

What other features in the cartoon help it make its point? _____

_____

_____

UNDERSTANDING THE CARTOON'S MAIN IDEA—ACTIVITY #6

Some cartoons are simple. Others are quite complicated. But no matter how complex, a cartoon must make one clear statement about something. This student editorial cartoon is visually complicated. But it does have one main point. Study it closely. Then answer the questions below.

What is the cartoon's main point? _____

_____

_____

Why do you think the artist included so many reporters in the interview on the left side of the cartoon?

_____

_____

Why is it unlikely that, in real life, the figures labeled "Sharpton" and "Farrakhan" would be with the others on the right? _____

_____

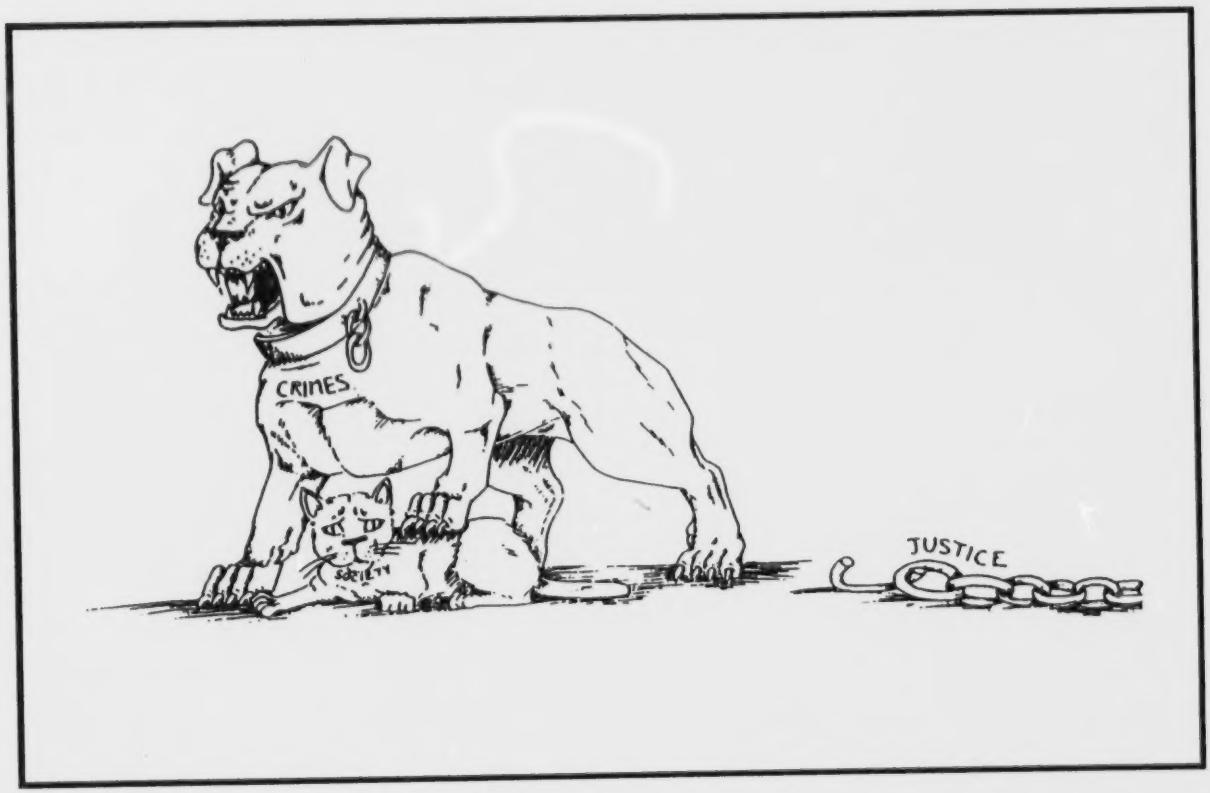
_____

Without the "Sharpton" and "Farrakhan" figures in that group, the cartoon's point would change. How? _____

_____

_____

_____


CRIMES
JUSTICE

OBJECTIVE

The activities in this section are designed to help your students understand what analogies and symbols in cartoons are, and - more importantly - why they are the essential ingredients that make cartoons such thought-provoking forms of expression.

COMMENTS

What makes an editorial cartoon more than a simple literal statement of an opinion or idea is its use of analogy, symbol, or metaphor. Cartoonist Roy Paul Nelson has written, "The strength of an editorial cartoon lies in its analogy. The best of the editorial cartoonists do not depict a problem in literal terms. They liken it to something else and invite the reader to stretch his imagination."

In this section, it is important to teach students exactly what an analogy is, and why it has the power to "stretch" the imagination and make us think. In its simplest terms, an analogy says, "This thing is like that other thing, at least in one respect."

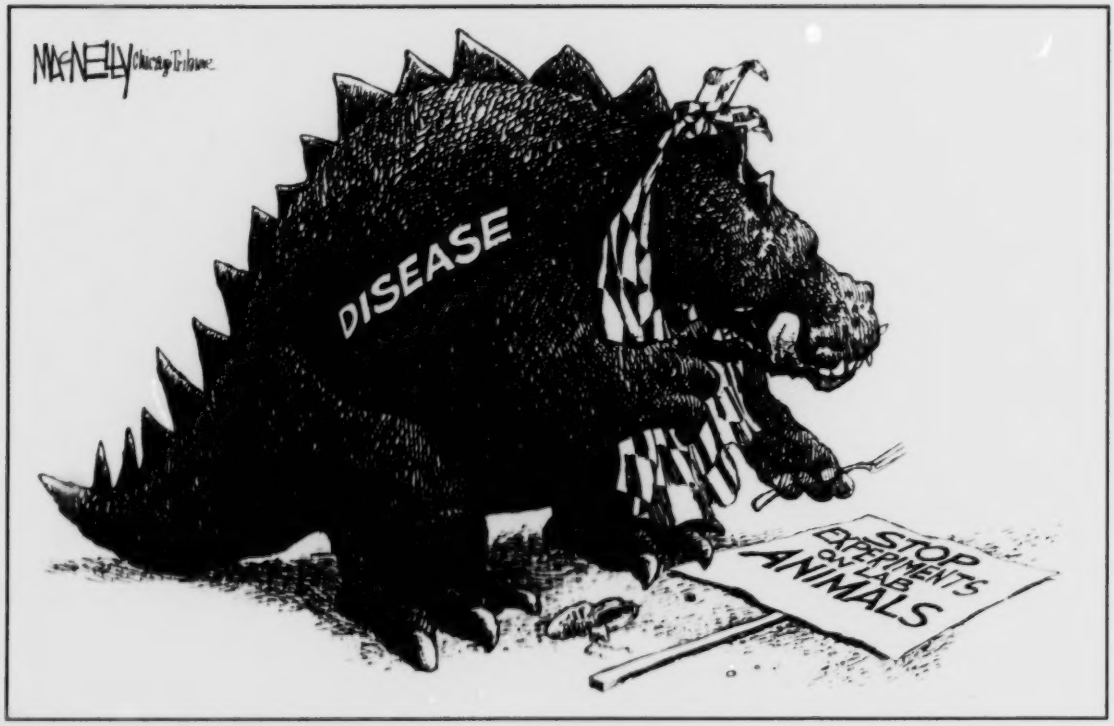
In **Cartoon #1**, the idea of disease is shown as a huge monster who is swallowing up a demonstrator opposed to the use of animals in medical lab experiments. In **Cartoon #2**, the nation's health care system is shown as a sick patient. A program to reform health care is shown as some medicine being fed into the patient's arm intravenously. But the high cost of the program is symbolized by the blood dripping from the patient's other arm. Obviously, no analogy is perfect. Money is not blood. But the two may be alike in some ways. In what ways? That's for you, as the viewer of the cartoon, to figure out.

Symbols are the elements that make up most analogies. They may be unique. Or they may be widely shared and recognized - Uncle Sam, the Republican elephant, etc. Analogies and symbols in cartoons present abstract ideas or problems in a visual form. In doing this, they give the mind a handle, a way into a subject. They enable us to grasp what we can't see. They extend thought. In a way, all human language and thought has evolved through just such imaginative extensions of one idea to another.

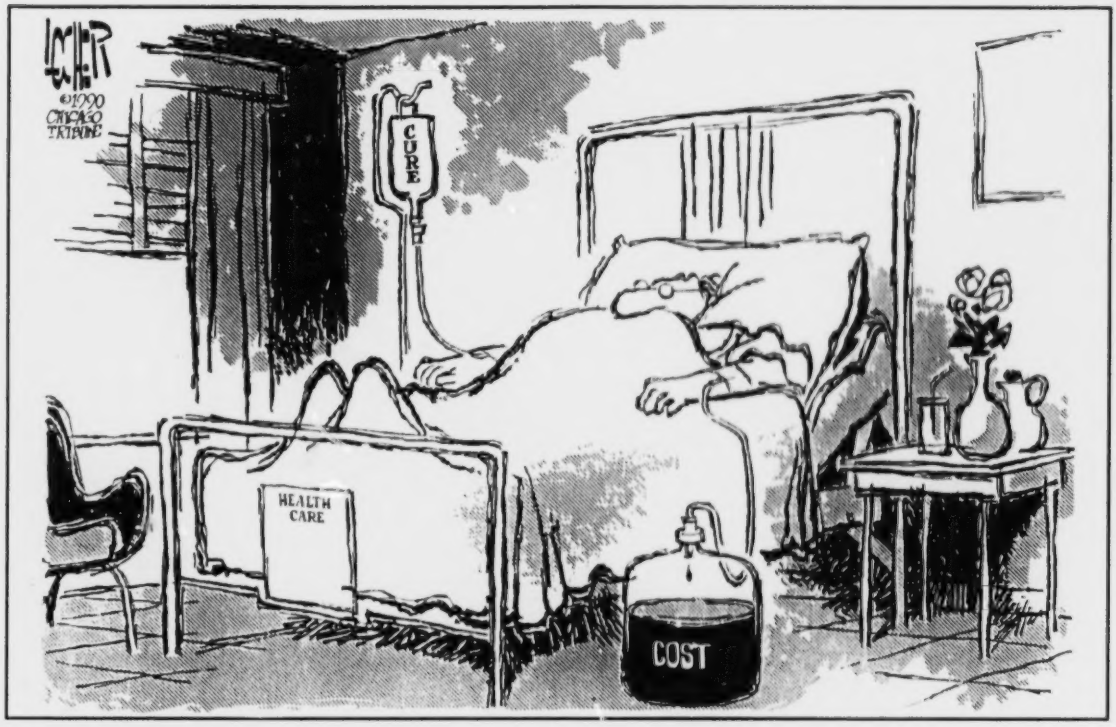
To get a bit more down to earth, take a look at **Cartoon #3**, a student-drawn cartoon. The analogies in this cartoon are fairly simple. Crime is a powerful bulldog, the rest of society is a helpless cat, and a weak system of justice is a broken chain. Yet, think of how much more this cartoon conveys than a statement such as, "Crime is destroying our society." The bulldog evokes a range of meanings and strong feelings - of something dangerous, something with a life of its own, something massive and unpredictable, etc. How much richer this range of meanings is than any simple, literal statement could ever be.

Obviously, crime isn't exactly like this bulldog. In fact, it could be maintained that this symbol exaggerates the problem and makes us think about it in distorted ways. But even if that's so, isn't it a valuable exercise to have to think through the points of similarity and difference between this analogy and the thing it stands for?

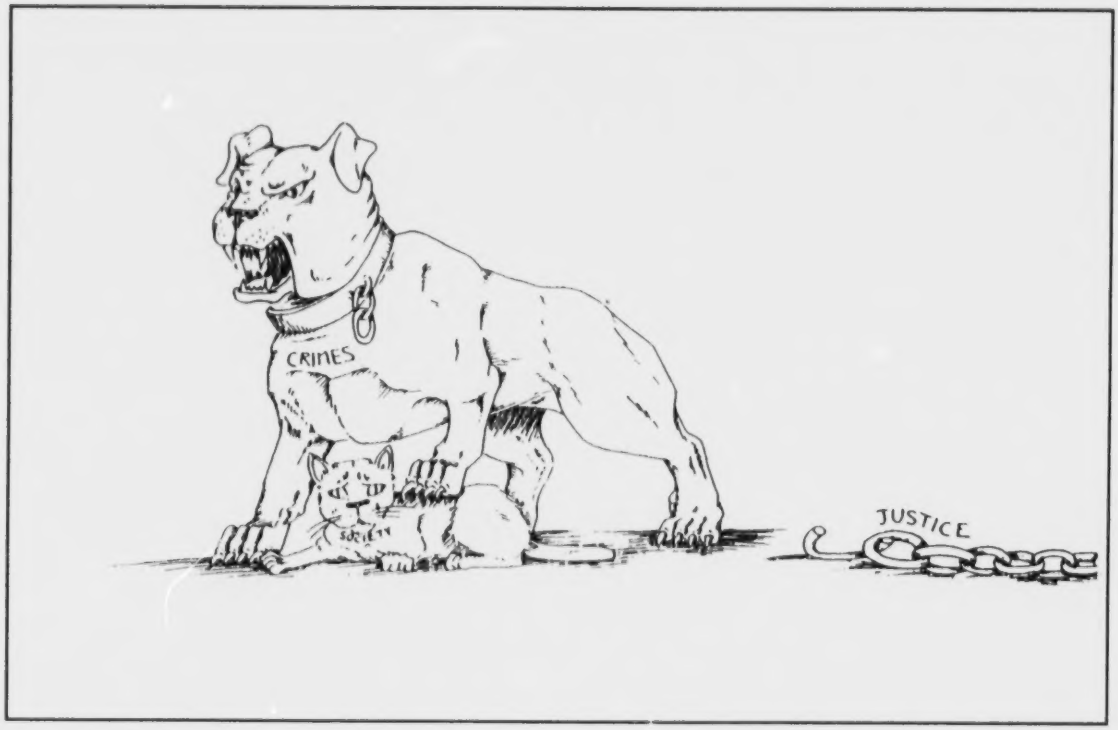
Your students can begin to learn to do just that by trying some of the exercises in this section.


McNELLY Chicago Tribune
DISEASE
STOP EXPERIMENTS ON LAB ANIMALS

CARTOON #1



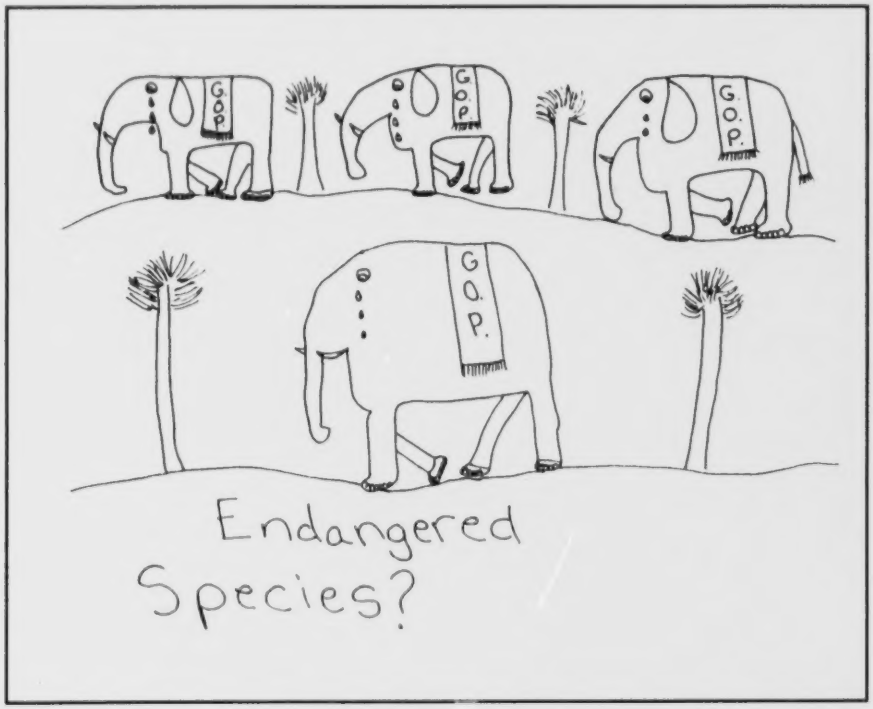
CARTOON #2



CARTOON #3

21

Most cartoons use symbols - that is, objects or designs that stand for some other thing or idea. This cartoon uses a famous symbol often used for one of our political parties. Study the cartoon. Then answer the questions below.



What famous symbol is used in this cartoon and what does it stand for? _____

_____

_____

_____

What is an endangered species? _____

_____

_____

_____

What is the cartoon's main point? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Many cartoons use an elephant for the Republican Party and a donkey for the Democratic Party. Below is a list of animals and a list of people or problems in the news. Draw a line connecting each item on the right to the animal you think would be the best symbol for it.

Tiger	**The President**
Dog	**harmful drugs**
Monkey	**war**
Dinosaur	**Congress**
Turtle	**the deficit**
Peacock	**students**

Now use some of these symbols in a cartoon about some problem in the news. Draw your cartoon in the space below.

Editorial cartoonists often use figures from fables or children's stories in their cartoons. For example, many cartoons use the figures of the wolf and Little Red Riding Hood. In these cartoons, the wolf stands for some problem or someone who is bad. Little Red Riding Hood stands for someone who is being fooled or tricked. In the space below draw your own cartoon showing both the wolf and Little Red Riding Hood.

The point of your cartoon will depend on how you label each of the two figures - and what you have them say. Below are five suggested names for the wolf and five for Little Red Riding Hood. Choose one name for each figure and use it in your cartoon. Add words to show what the figures are saying. As a group, share and discuss these cartoons.

WOLF	LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
Congress	**the public**
terrorists	**airplane passengers**
news reporters	**the President**
corporations	**news reporters**
the President	**taxpayers**

Many cartoons use famous symbols simply as a way to identify parts of the cartoon - Uncle Sam, for example, to stand for the United States. Each of these two cartoons uses a well-known symbol in a more complicated way. Study these cartoons closely. Then answer the questions below

What symbol does each cartoon use, and what does that symbol usually stand for? _____

_____

_____

_____

How does the artist use the symbol not only to stand for something, but to help the cartoon make its main point? _____

_____

_____

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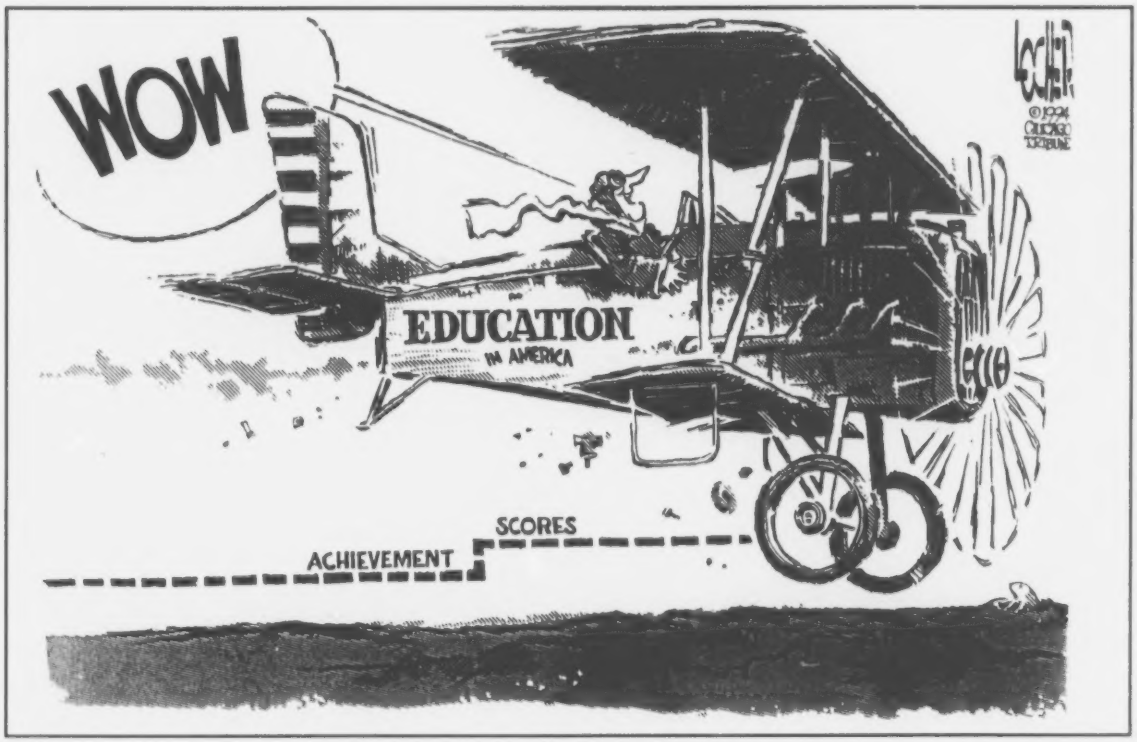

This cartoon uses the relationship between a rickety old airplane and a dotted line showing the plane's path of flight to make a point about U.S. schools and the academic performance of their students. In other words, the plane and the dotted line are used as an analogy for the school system and student achievement. Below are a number of other relationships that might have been used as analogies in a cartoon about the same topic. Choose one of them and use it to draw your own cartoon about this topic.

fire truck and fire
sinking ship and life boats
hospital and patient
pool table and billiard balls
airplane and parachutes
hunter and ducks

Newspaper editorials often use analogies and metaphors to express abstract ideas about news events, issues, and personalities. Here are a few examples: "This greatest of American leadership has been replaced by a wrecking crew." "But neither Congress nor the Administration wants real cuts; they want monkey business." "Every time the Judicial Commission pops its head out of its foxhole, people start taking shots at it."

During the next week, read all the editorials and columns on your newspaper's editorial page. In the space below, record all the statements you find that use symbols, analogies, or metaphors. Create an editorial cartoon that uses some of these images to make the same point as one of the editorials you have read.

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LOCHER
ETHICS
CONGRESS

OBJECTIVE

Satire and irony are the main forms humor takes in most editorial cartoons. The activities in this section should help students get some idea of what these kinds of humor are and how they can help a cartoon make its point more effectively.

COMMENTS

Cartoon #1, drawn by a high school student, makes it quite clear that an editorial cartoon need not be humorous to make a powerful statement in a very effective way.

But it isn't easy to make a completely humorless cartoon work. In the world of ideas, the editorial cartoon is already a kind of blunt instrument. A grimly serious cartoon always courts the danger of coming across as too heavy-handed. To be effective, it needs to give the reader an honorable way out. An editorial cartoon must respect its dissenters enough to avoid implying that they are either fools or knaves simply for disagreeing.

Serious though it may be, the cartoon above is also quite effective. It wouldn't have worked well had the words in it read, "The death penalty violates one of the Ten Commandments." Instead of that, the cartoon simply lets the Commandment speak for itself. That way, each reader is allowed to decide what the cartoon's implications are.

In a great many cases, humor is the primary means by which a cartoon gives the reader that kind of space. The humor may be subtle and quite gentle, as in **Cartoon #2**.

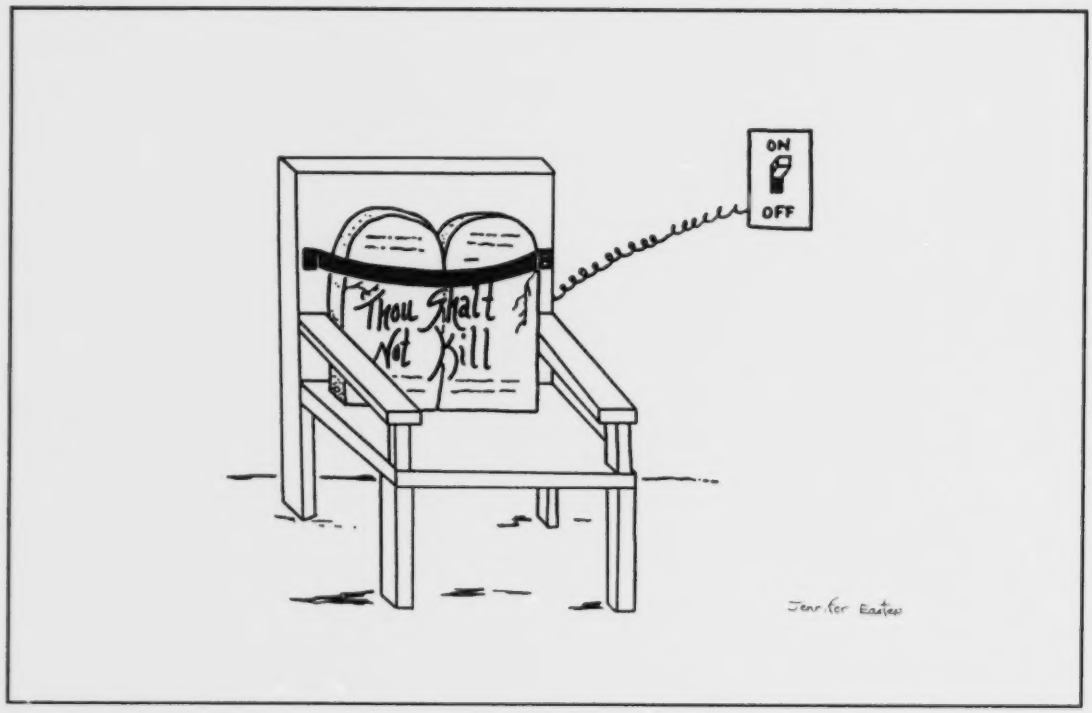
It may be satirical, poking fun at lawmakers or other easily recognizable public targets, as in **Cartoon #3**, by Dick Locher.

Or it may be biting and ironic, as in **Cartoon #4**, which is about the problem of oil spills.

Irony is an especially effective form of humor for editorial cartoons. Its essence is to use words (or some other feature in the cartoon) to express a meaning contrary to the overall point the cartoon is actually trying to make. The dissonance adds to the task of interpreting the cartoon, and this forces the reader to become even more of an active participant in the "dialogue" the cartoon initiates.

In a great many cartoons, humor is produced by taking a line of thought or a trend in society to its logical, but absurd, conclusion. In other cartoons, the humor is of the "laughing just to keep from crying" variety - as with **Cartoon #5**, by Jeff MacNelly.

This cartoon also proves, by the way, that even the most dismal of subjects can inspire a humorous and thought-provoking cartoon.



CARTOON #1

FITNESS PANEL DISCOVERS FAVORITE EXERCISE OF U.S. CHILDREN...
CLICK! CLICK!
FAVORITE STRENUOUS EXERCISE...
NO REMOTE CONTROL.
CLICK! CLICK!
ROTHCO

CARTOON #2

CARTOON #3

CARTOON #4

The Sherpa

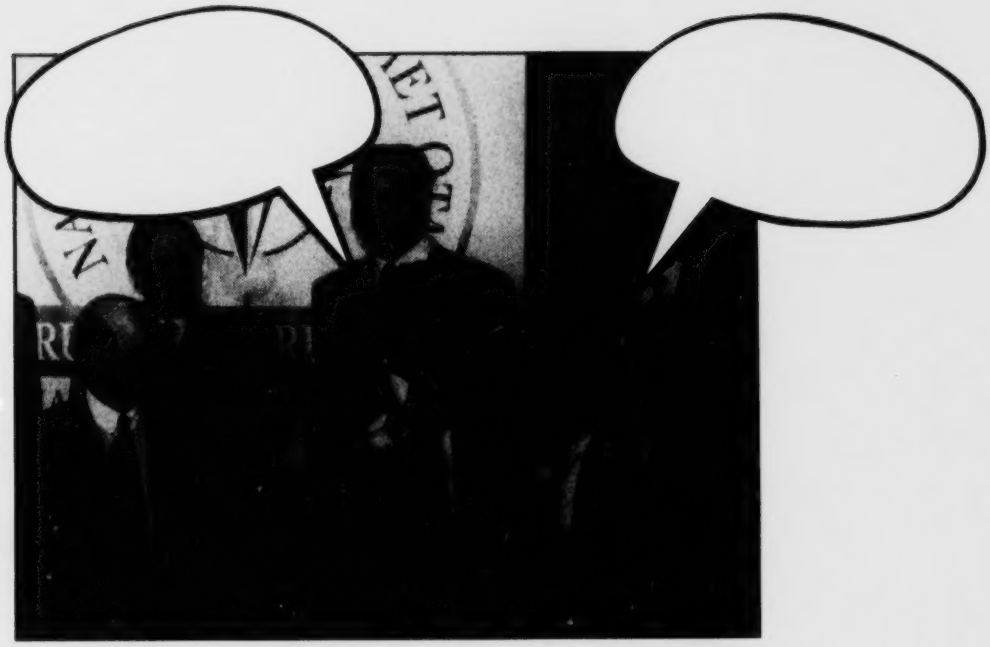
CARTOON #5

Editorial cartoons often try to make us laugh about very serious problems or dangers in our world. Look through recent newspapers for examples of editorial cartoons you think are funny. Attach two of them in the space provided here. Then answer the questions below.

Which cartoon is funniest? _____

Which cartoon makes its point best? _____

Which cartoon do you like best? Why? _____



One way to make a funny cartoon is to make a serious photograph into a cartoon by using word or thought "bubbles" the way comic strips do. Make a funny cartoon by adding words or thoughts in the bubbles provided here.

Now find a photo of your own and do the same thing to it. Attach your photo-cartoon to the space provided below.

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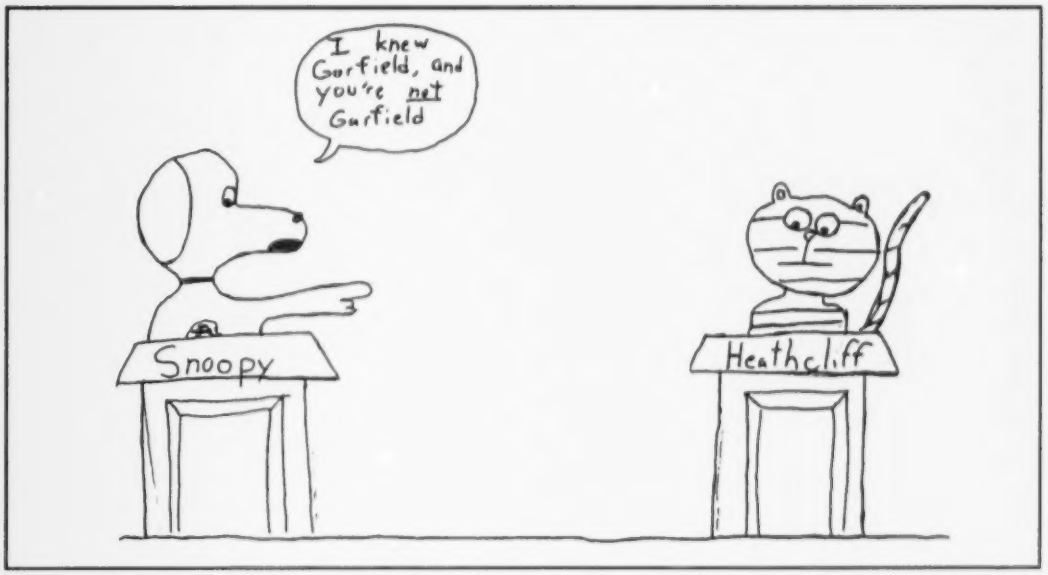


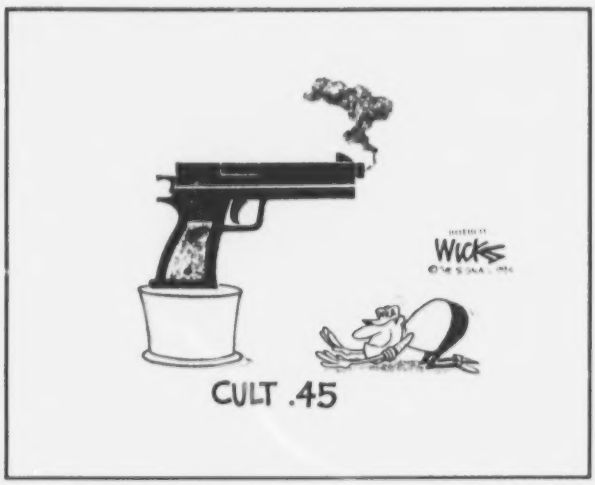
During a debate in 1988 between vice presidential candidates Lloyd Bentsen and Dan Quayle, Mr. Bentsen made fun of some remarks Mr. Quayle made about former President John Kennedy. Mr. Bentsen said, "I knew John Kennedy, and you are no John Kennedy." The above student editorial cartoon uses two famous comic strip characters to take a humorous look at that debate. Look through your newspaper's comic strips. Use some of the characters in these comics in a humorous cartoon of your own about a recent news story. Draw your cartoon in the space below.

Advertisements can give you ideas for amusing cartoons. Find an ad in a newspaper or magazine. Attach the ad here. In the space below, use the picture in the ad to draw a funny cartoon about some local, national, or world news event.

ADVERTISEMENT

YOUR CARTOON

Both of these editorial cartoons comment on the problems of guns and violence. The cartoon on the left uses irony. The other cartoon is not humorous. Study the two cartoons closely. Then answer the questions below.



Summarize in a sentence or two the different points each cartoon makes about guns. _____

_____

_____

What techniques in the cartoon on the left make it humorous? _____

_____

_____

Which cartoon do you like best? Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In your newspaper's editorial page, find an editorial or column on some serious issue in the news today. Underline all the opinion words in the editorial. Now circle all the adjectives or descriptive phrases that emphasize the point the writer is making. Based on the opinions expressed in the editorial or column, draw two editorial cartoons in the space provided below. In one cartoon, make the writer's point in a deadly serious way. In the other, make it in a humorous way. As a group, share the cartoons and decide which ones are most effective.

SERIOUS CARTOON

HUMOROUS CARTOON

"I THINK THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT IS OUT OF CONTROL!"

OBJECTIVE

The activities in this section are designed to help your students understand the role exaggeration, visual hyperbole, and excessive understatement play in helping a cartoon get its point across. In particular, students should come to appreciate the way in which EXAGGERATION and the relative proportions of objects in a cartoon can be used to visually illustrate many kinds of relationships - of strength, speed, size, importance, etc.

COMMENTS

Exaggeration is what gives an editorial cartoon its punch. In the world of journalism, editorial cartoons are sledgehammers. They have to capture a reader's attention and hammer home a point in a matter of seconds. A cartoon may in fact have a very complex and subtle message to deliver. But unless it grabs the reader and forces a response, that complexity is going to go to waste.

By outrageously exaggerating (or understating) something, a cartoon does engage in a kind of deliberate artistic distortion of the truth. But if done correctly, that distortion will be for a good cause. It will help provoke debate and force the reader to think in a more concentrated way about an issue.

Two points should be made clear to students. First, there are many ways to exaggerate or understate in a cartoon. Secondly, not all forms of exaggeration work.

As for the first of these points, let the cartoons speak for themselves. Most obviously, exaggeration takes the form of changes in the normal proportions between objects, as in Cartoon #1, a student cartoon.

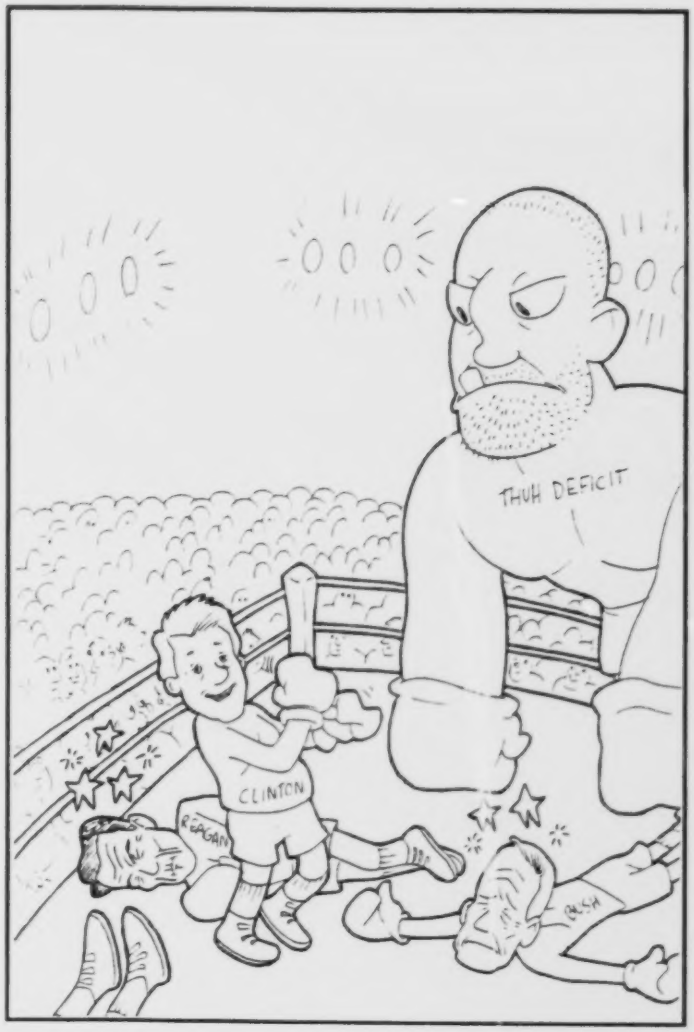
Or a cartoon may exaggerate the seriousness of the problem addressed - as is the case (we hope) in Cartoon #2, which pokes fun at the poor showing of Americans on international tests of geography knowledge.

In Cartoon #3, another student-drawn cartoon, the seriousness of a problem's consequences has been exaggerated.

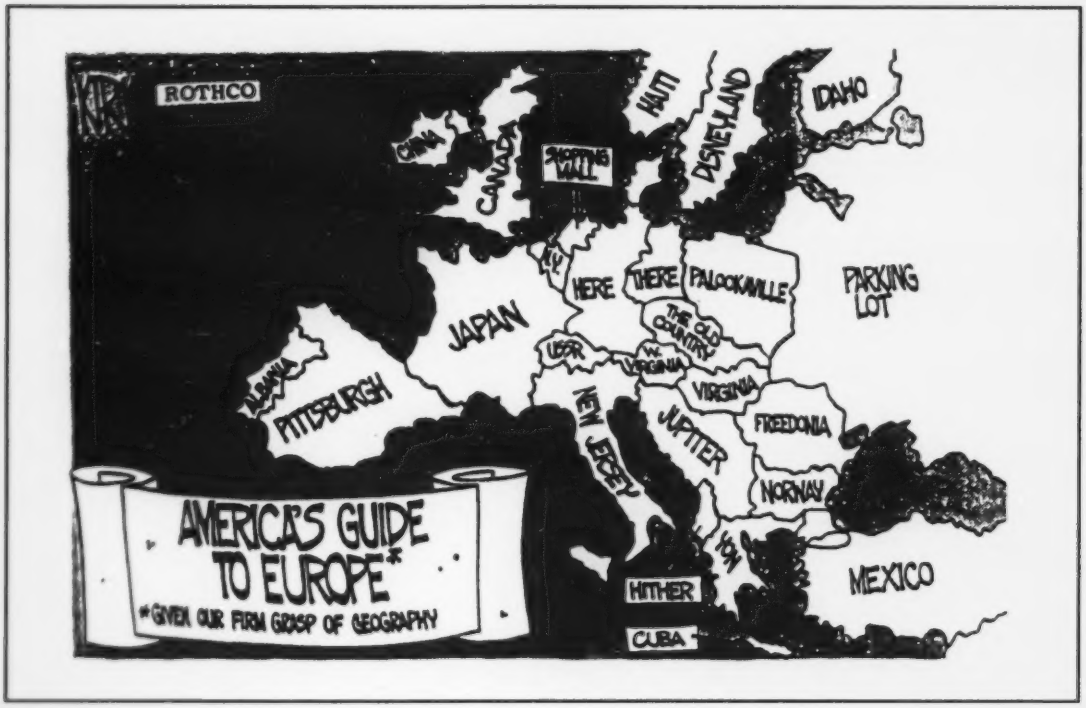
The impact of a cartoon's exaggeration can sometimes be heightened by combining it with the ironic use of understatement. In Cartoon #4, the calm, casual exchange between the teacher and the students adds to the impact of the exaggerated portrayal of the problem of violence in schools.

All the forms of exaggeration in these cartoons work well. But there is a fine line between effective exaggeration and silliness. A cartoon that does nothing more than blow out of proportion the seriousness or danger of some problem may only provoke disbelief. If the cartoon screams out about a problem that IS truly dangerous, that's one thing. But in many cases, it's better to add some kind of light touch to a cartoon. In Cartoon #3 (the Greenhouse Effect cartoon), the surfer, the question mark over the polar bear's head, and the understated caption all provide that light touch.

To sum up, your students need to understand that editorial cartoons are indeed sledgehammers - but gentle sledgehammers.



CARTOON #1


ROTHCO
CHINA
CANADA
SHOPPING MALL
HAITI
DISNEYLAND
IDAHO
HERE
THERE
PALOOKAVILLE
PARKING LOT
THE OLD COUNTRY
JAPAN
W. VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA
ALBANIA
PITTSBURGH
NEW JERSEY
JUPITER
FREEDONIA
NORWAY
MEXICO
HITHER
CUBA
AMERICA'S GUIDE TO EUROPE*
*GIVEN OUR FIRM GRASP OF GEOGRAPHY

CARTOON #2

CARTOON #3

MANLEY
Chicago Tribune
TOMMY HAS TO GO TO THE BOYS' ROOM, SO, JIMMY, COULD YOU PLEASE LAY DOWN SOME COVERING FIRE WHILE I SECURE THE PERIMETER?
SOCIAL STUDIES

CARTOON #4

The cartoon below uses exaggeration. Look at it closely. Then answer the questions underneath it.

What object in the cartoon is shown as very large?_____

_____

_____

_____

What does this object stand for?_____

_____

_____

_____

What objects are too small?_____

_____

_____

_____

What do these objects stand for _____

_____

_____

_____

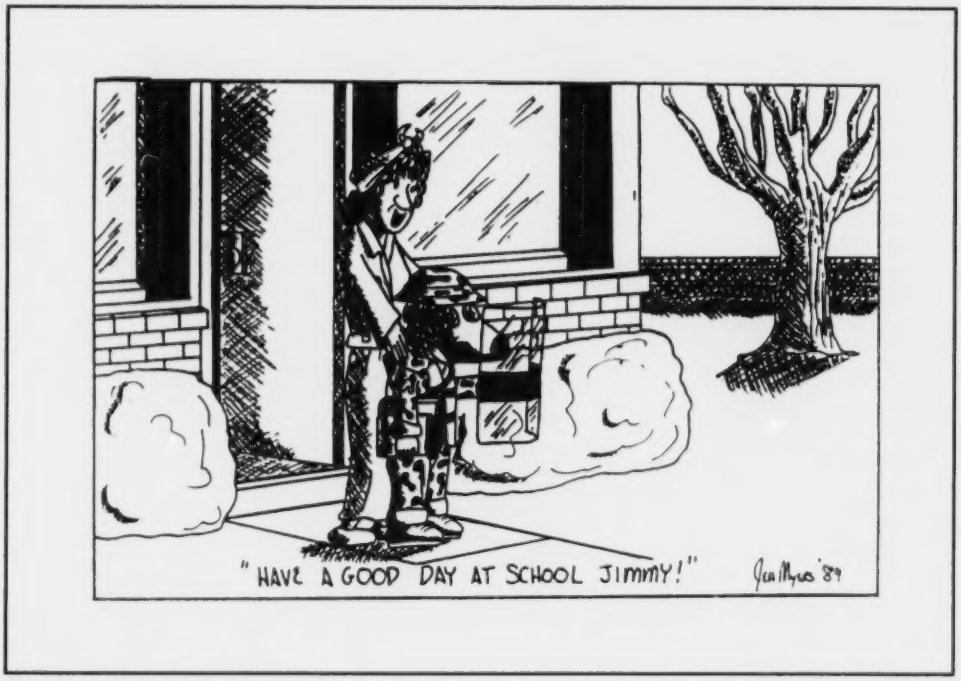
What point does the cartoon make? _____

_____

_____

_____

Cartoons don't always exaggerate things by showing them as very large or very small. Sometimes the exaggeration is in how bad a problem is, or how much money it will cost to solve it, and so on. The student cartoon below exaggerates something in this way. Study it closely. Then answer the questions below.



In a sentence or two, what big problem is this cartoon about? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In what way does the cartoon exaggerate the problem? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In many cases, cartoonists exaggerate certain ideas by showing one or more objects either as very large or very small. But exaggeration can be used in others ways as well. Both of the cartoons below use exaggeration to make points about the same problem. Look at the two cartoons closely. Then answer the following questions.

What in the cartoon on the left is exaggerated? _____

_____

_____

_____

What in the cartoon on the right is exaggerated? _____

_____

_____

_____

Which cartoon do you think makes the best use of exaggeration? Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Below are a list of problems in the news. What object or group of objects would you use in an editorial cartoon to stand for each problem listed? Next to each problem, write the name of the object or objects you would use.

budget deficit _____

_____

_____

terrorism _____

_____

_____

pollution _____

_____

_____

school violence _____

_____

_____

racial prejudice _____

_____

_____

Now read more about one of these problems. On separate sheets of paper, draw two editorial cartoons using the object or objects you have chosen for that problem. In one cartoon exaggerate the way you draw these objects in some way. In the other, do not exaggerate them. Which cartoon do you think is better?

This cartoon uses hyperbole, or exaggeration, to make its point. But it also uses a humorous kind of understatement - in the expressions on the faces of the gun store owner and the customer, for example. Study the cartoon closely. Then answer the questions below.

In a sentence or two, what is the cartoon's main point? _____

_____

_____

_____

In what way does the cartoon use exaggeration to make its point? _____

_____

_____

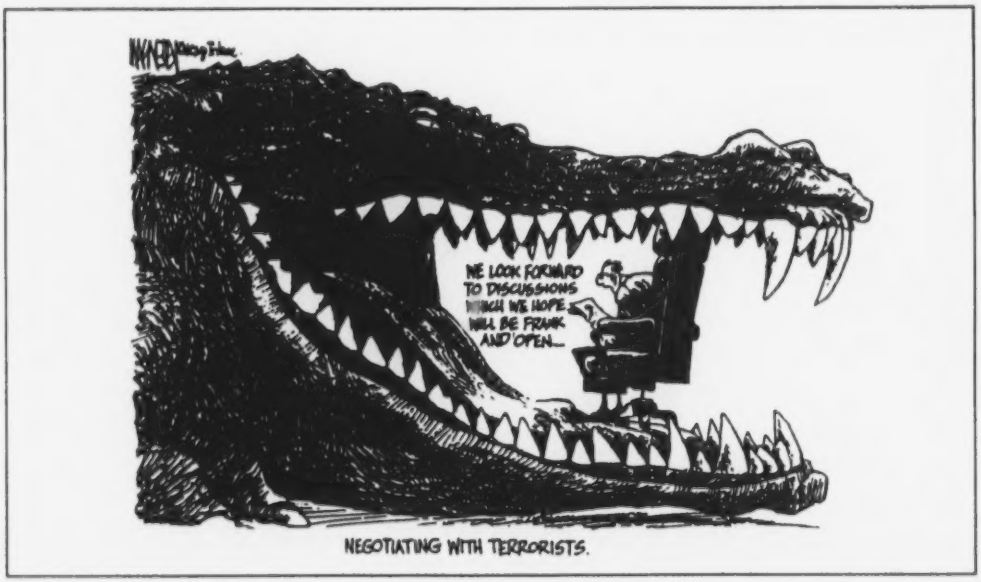
_____

How do the expressions on the faces of the gun store owner and customer add to the cartoon's overall impact? _____

_____

_____

Cartoons exaggerate certain features - either in terms of their size or in some other way - in order to make a point effectively and dramatically. But exaggeration can also unfairly distort the nature of the problem the cartoon addresses. In this cartoon, a huge, out-of-proportion crocodile is used to make a strong point about the futility of negotiating with terrorists. Study the cartoon. Then write a brief one-paragraph answer to each of the two questions below.



A person who agrees with this cartoon's point would say the exaggeration in it is justified because ...

_____

_____

_____

_____

A person who disagrees with the cartoon's point would say the exaggeration in it is distorted because ... _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SPEAK SOFTLY
AND CARRY
A BIG STICK

OBJECTIVE

The activities in this section are designed to help students better appreciate the role of caricatures and stereotypes in editorial cartooning. The activities will show students that caricature is more than a way to exaggerate and make fun of well-known figures in the news. In conjunction with other cartoon elements, caricature can deepen the impact and reinforce the message of an editorial cartoon. Students should also come to recognize the value of stereotypes in a cartoon, as well as their limitations - and their potential to reinforce simple-minded and harmful prejudices.

COMMENTS

Caricature is what makes the well-known figures in a cartoon immediately recognizable. That is perhaps its most obvious function in editorial cartooning. Clearly that's the job caricature is doing in **Cartoon #1**, an editorial cartoon about Cuba's Fidel Castro.

In other words, given that a cartoon is not a photographic medium, caricature helps us identify a news figure quickly. It usually does this by exaggerating or distorting one or more of that person's prominent features.

But caricature is used for more than simple identification purposes. Editorial cartoons generally aim to stir up emotions and provoke debate. To do this, they attack, needle, deflate, and ridicule. On the whole, caricatures are not flattering. And the features cartoonists choose to exaggerate in the caricatures they draw are almost always the least flattering - Nixon's five-o-clock shadow, Henry Kissinger's large nose and horned-rimmed glasses, Lyndon Johnson's big ears and squinty eyes.

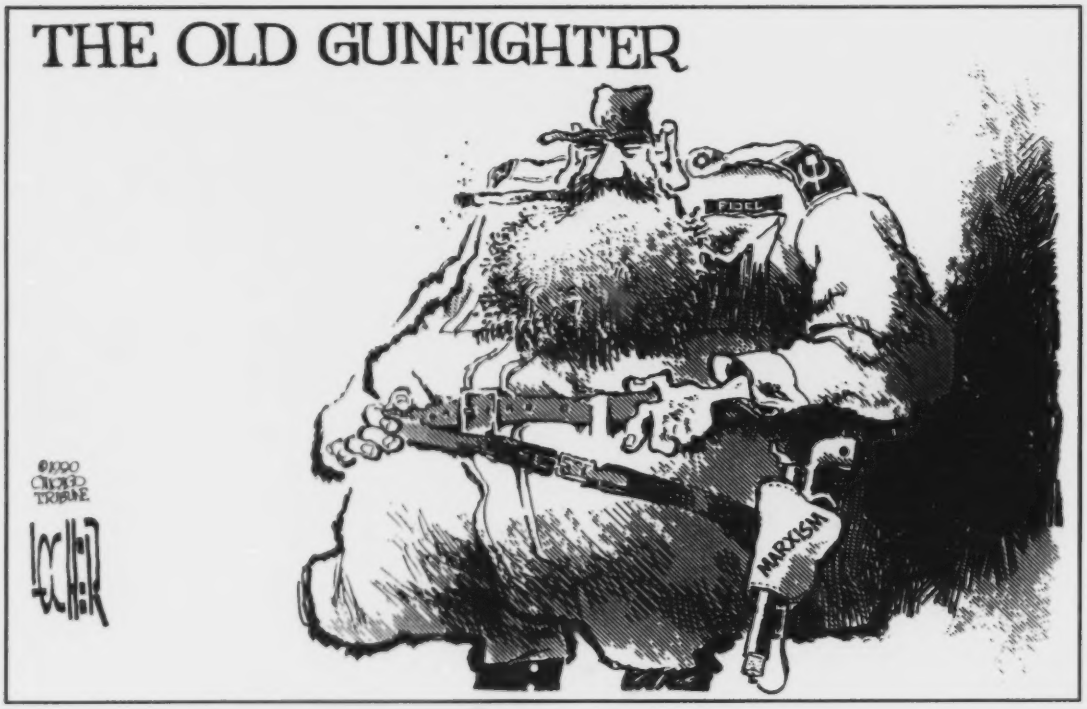
At its best, caricaturing can reveal inner strengths and weakness of character. This is certainly true of many of the works of caricaturist David Levine, about whom one writer has said, "David has the wit, taste and genius to sense exactly how far to sink his teeth into the essence of a subject without losing credibility or lapsing into polemical farce. Moreover, his work invariably serves to expand our knowledge of the subject, not simply as to features but to something of the person beneath."

And as **Cartoon #2** proves, even fairly simple caricatures can be used to do much more than simply identify or ridicule prominent people. The use of caricature in this cartoon allows it to make a complex and subtle comparison of the presidential styles of Ronald Reagan and Theodore Roosevelt.

In a way, stereotypes are the opposite of caricatures. They obscure or eliminate anything uniquely individual by exaggerating features associated with an entire group. In doing this, they often play on unconscious biases we all share. For the cartoonist, they are a great convenience - the bearded protestor, the pipe-smoking professor, the bent and stooped social security recipient. But they can be terribly misleading - and insulting.

Still, it's not always easy to tell whether a given stereotype is simply a quick and easy way to communicate or a demeaning slur on some group. The one in **Cartoon #3** might be. And if you are a member of Congress, you're likely to find the one in **Cartoon #4** highly prejudicial.

As your students learn to be more aware of these cartooning devices, they will be better prepared to make individual judgments about the cartoons they see. In the activities that follow, we'll ask your students to exercise their critical thinking skills as they consider the elements of caricature and stereotype.

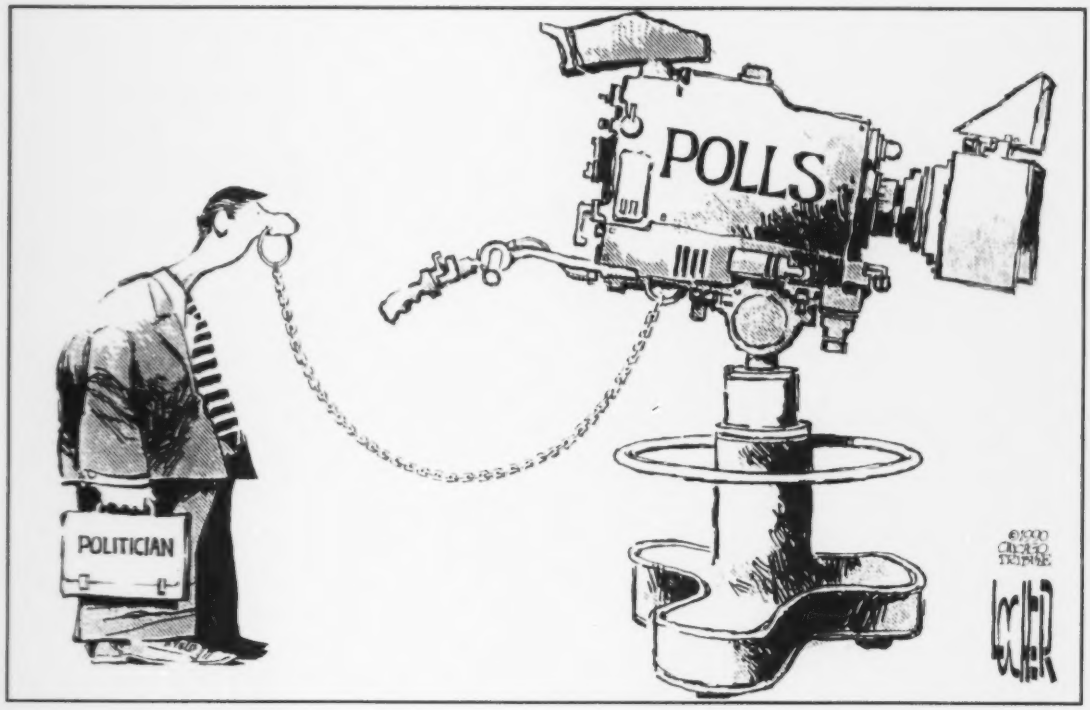


CARTOON #1

CARTOON #2

I DON'T WANT ANY LEMONADE- I WANT TO BUY YOUR LEMONADE STAND!
LEMON-ADE 10¢

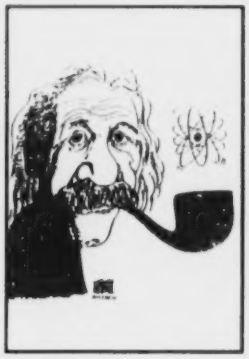
CARTOON #3



CARTOON #4

A caricature is a drawing of someone that exaggerates certain features of that person. These drawings are caricatures of the famous people listed below.

1



2

3

4

5

Match each name with the number next to his caricature. Then in each case, list the feature or features in the caricature that are exaggerated or made to look silly.

	NUMBER	FEATURE EXAGGERATED
Jesse Jackson	_____	_____
Ronald Reagan	_____	_____
Albert Einstein	_____	_____
James Madison	_____	_____
Franklin Roosevelt	_____	_____

Which of these caricatures do you like best? Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

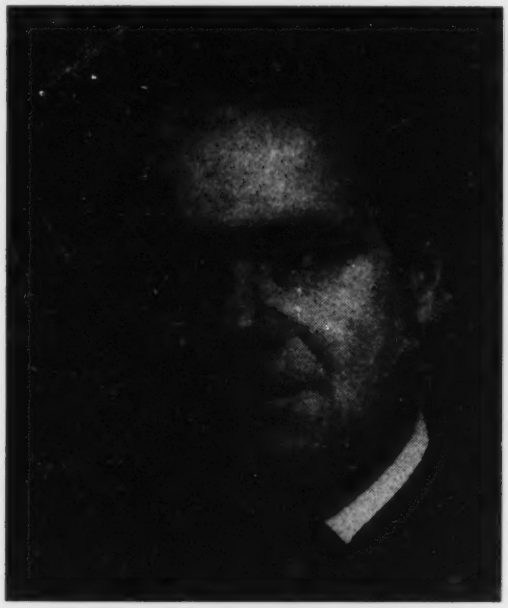
59

Find a photograph of a well-known person in the news. That person could be from your own community or state, from somewhere else in the nation, or from another country. Attach the photo of this person in the space for it here. Using the photo, draw your own caricature in the other space.

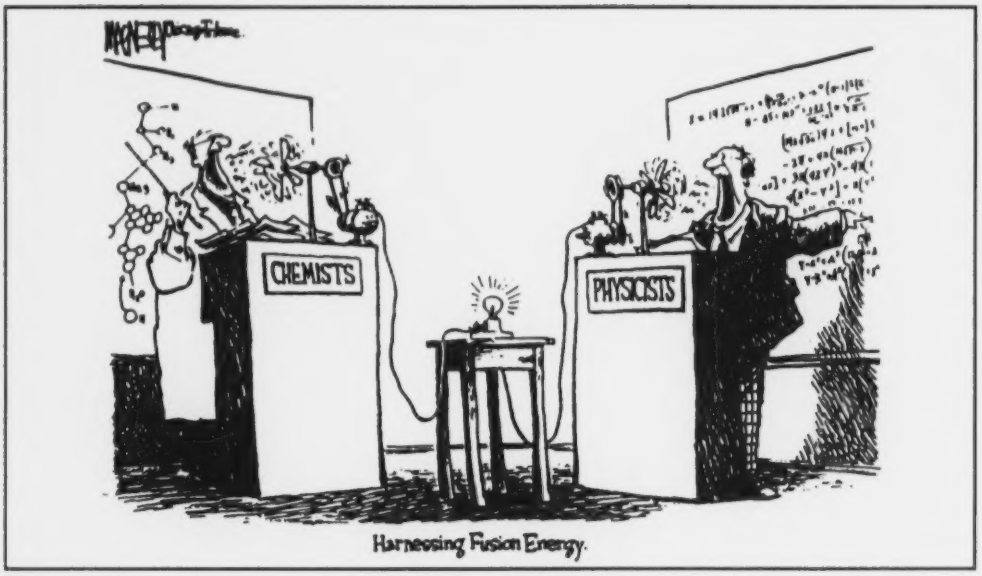
PHOTOGRAPH

YOUR CARICATURE

Caricatures exaggerate the unusual features of a person's face - for example, Ronald Reagan's wavy hair or Bill Clinton's chin. The photograph on the left is of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. Using this photo as a guide, draw your own caricature of Mr. Scalia in the space provided on the right.



Read newspaper stories about Justice Scalia and his views on some issue before the Supreme Court. In the space below, use your caricature in a cartoon about that issue.

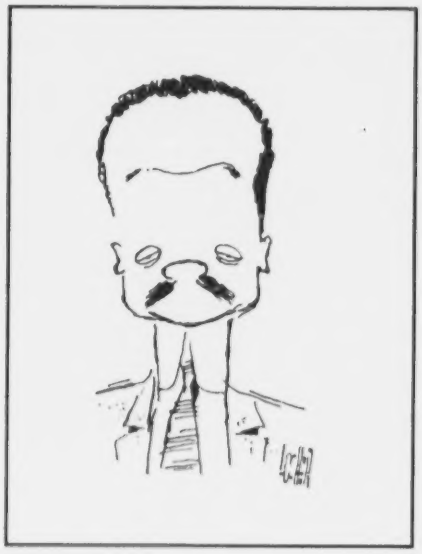


A stereotype is a commonly accepted, but too-simple idea or belief about some thing or group. In cartooning, a stereotype is a figure easily recognized as a member of some group. In this cartoon, for example, the two figures are scientists. Stereotypes of scientists often show them as older men, mostly bald but with a little frizzy hair, white coats, and so on.

Stereotypes make it easy to identify quickly the group a cartoon figure stands for. But some stereotypes may also be insulting to the groups they stand for. Over several weeks, find editorial cartoons with stereotypes of the groups listed below. Clip one cartoon for each group. Attach these cartoons to this sheet. Then to the right of each group's name, answer this question: Is the stereotype unfair? As a group, discuss the stereotypes in the cartoons and whether or not they are fair.

STEREOTYPE	IS THE STEREOTYPE UNFAIR?
older people	_____
blacks	_____
Arabs	_____
businessmen	_____
Japanese	_____
politicians	_____

Caricatures make fun of personalities in the news by exaggerating or distorting one or more distinctive features of those personalities. But the best caricatures distort features in a way that reveals something important about the subject being caricatured. Look closely at these three caricatures of civil rights leader Jesse Jackson. Then answer the questions below.



Which caricature is most realistic? _____

_____

_____

Which one is funniest? _____

_____

_____

Which one is most distorted? _____

_____

_____

Which one seems to reveal most about Mr. Jackson's personality? Why? _____

_____

_____

As a group, discuss your answers to these questions.

The best cartoonists use caricature as one of several elements that work together in a unified way to help the cartoon convey its message. In this cartoon, Jeff MacNelly makes a point about President Clinton and his plans to change the government and make it work more efficiently. Study the cartoon closely. Then answer the following questions:

What is the cartoon's main point? _____

_____

_____

In what ways do exaggeration and irony help to make the cartoon's point? _____

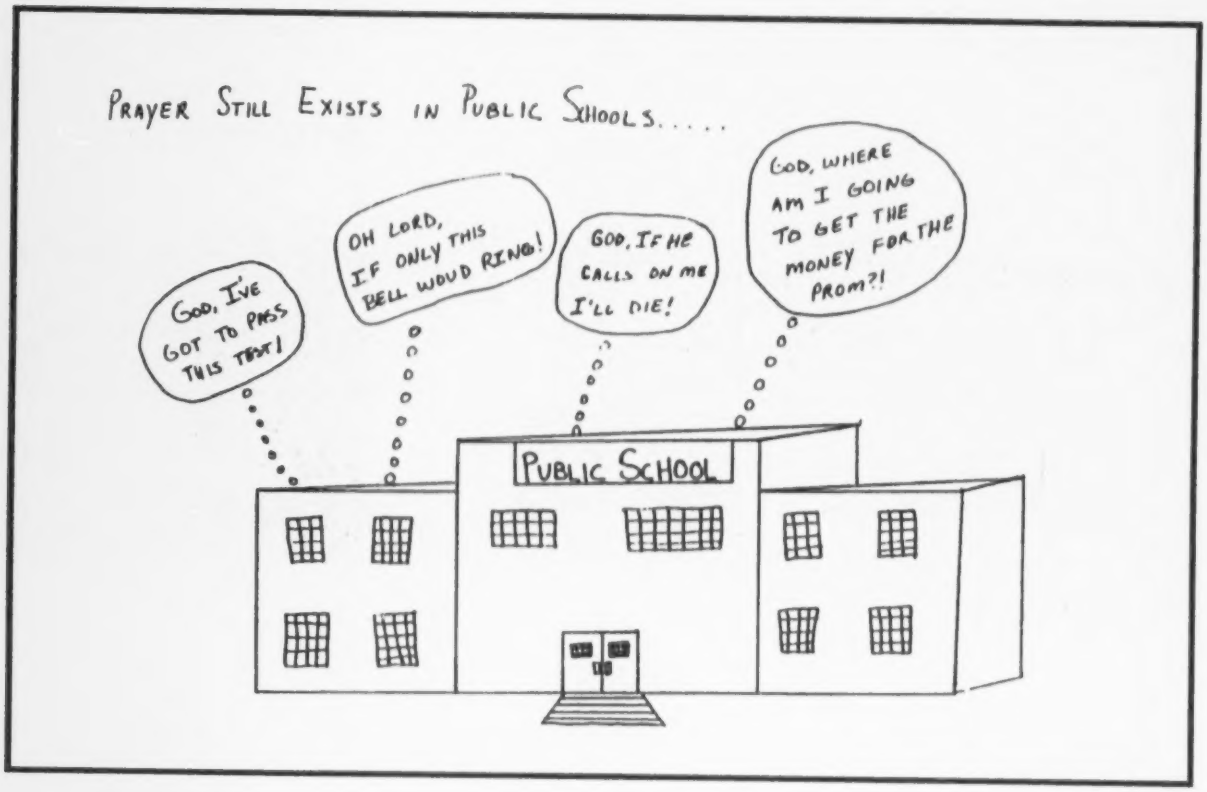
_____

_____

What features in the Clinton caricature help reinforce the cartoon's main point? _____

_____

_____


PRAYER STILL EXISTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.....
GOD, I'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST!
OH LORD, IF ONLY THIS BELL WOULD RING!
GOD, IF HE CALLS ON ME I'LL DIE!
GOD, WHERE AM I GOING TO GET THE MONEY FOR THE PROM?!
PUBLIC SCHOOL

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OBJECTIVE

The activities presented in this section are designed to help students see that words can be used in cartoons in a great many ways. These activities should also help your students understand that words work best in a cartoon when they reinforce the cartoon's non-verbal features. Words alone cannot do all the work of the cartoon.

COMMENTS

One of the biggest mistakes student cartoonists make is in expecting words to do most of the cartoon's work. **Cartoon #1**, a student cartoon, is ALMOST guilty of that mistake.

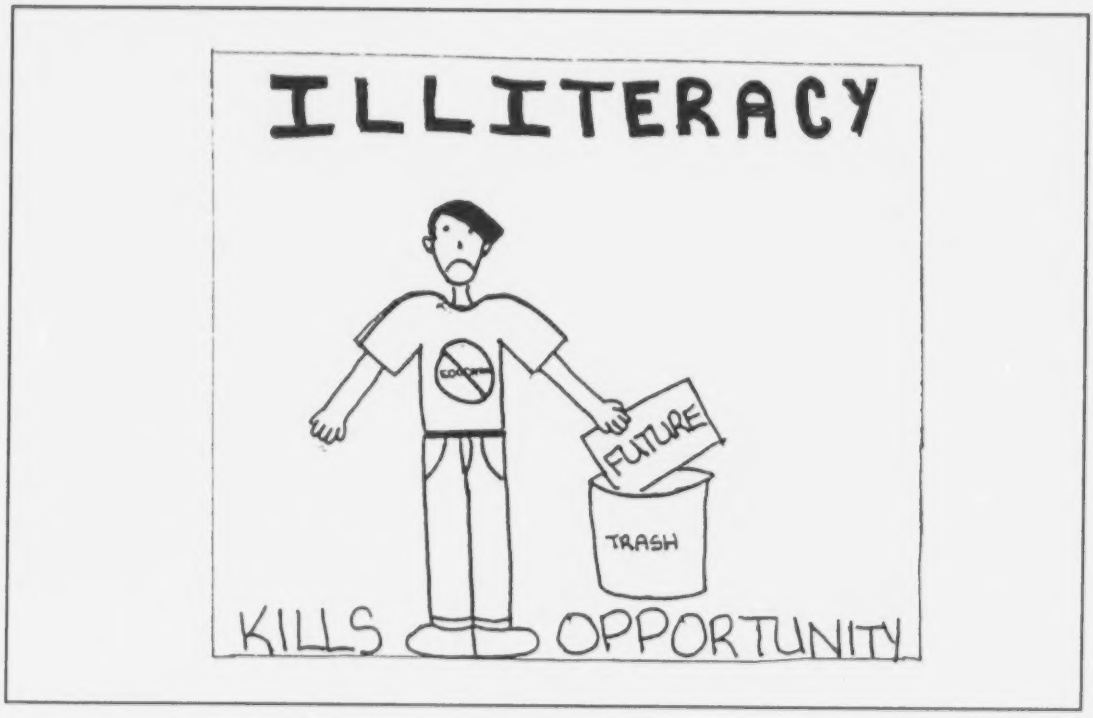
This cartoon comes close to being little more than a poster. As a poster, it would be clever and admirable, but a poster is not a cartoon. However, a few features in this cartoon save it and, in fact, make it quite good. The expression on the boy's face and the symbol of the trash can into which he is depositing his future add depth to what would otherwise be a simple verbal warning.

Often, students use such warnings ("smoking kills," "don't drink and drive," "save the Earth," etc.) as captions for very simple cartoons. Such captions are titles that actually give away the whole store. They make it unnecessary even to look at the visual elements in the cartoon. But the visual elements are what give the editorial cartoon its unique power.

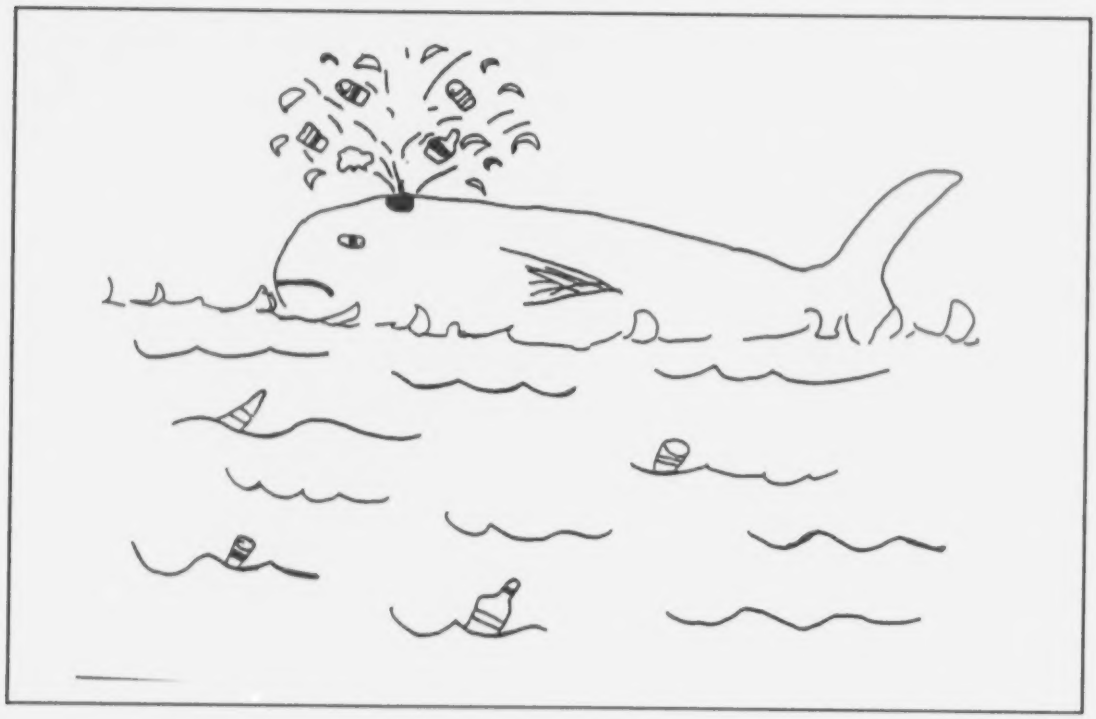
After all, a cartoon can do without words entirely (**Cartoon #2**, a student-drawn cartoon). But words by themselves cannot make a complete cartoon — except in very rare cases, such as the one represented by **Cartoon #3**.

This "US-THEM" cartoon is only one dramatic example of the many ways words can function in a cartoon. Captions can be titles, famous sayings, or words uttered by one or more of the characters in the cartoon. However, captions are certainly not the only way words can be used, as **Cartoon #4**, another student editorial cartoon, makes clear. But though this last cartoon uses many words — and in two different ways — it is still unified and given its significance by the visual element of the public school building.

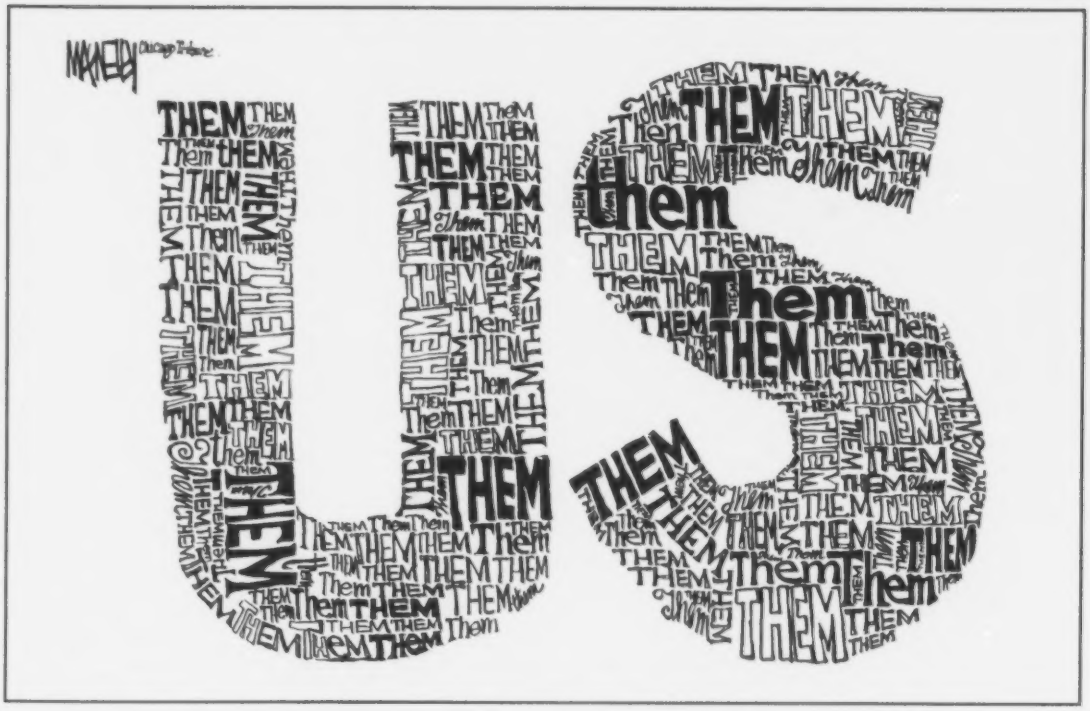
Finally, as **Cartoon #5** by Dick Locher makes clear, even a simple one-word caption can suffice when it accompanies a vivid and powerful image.



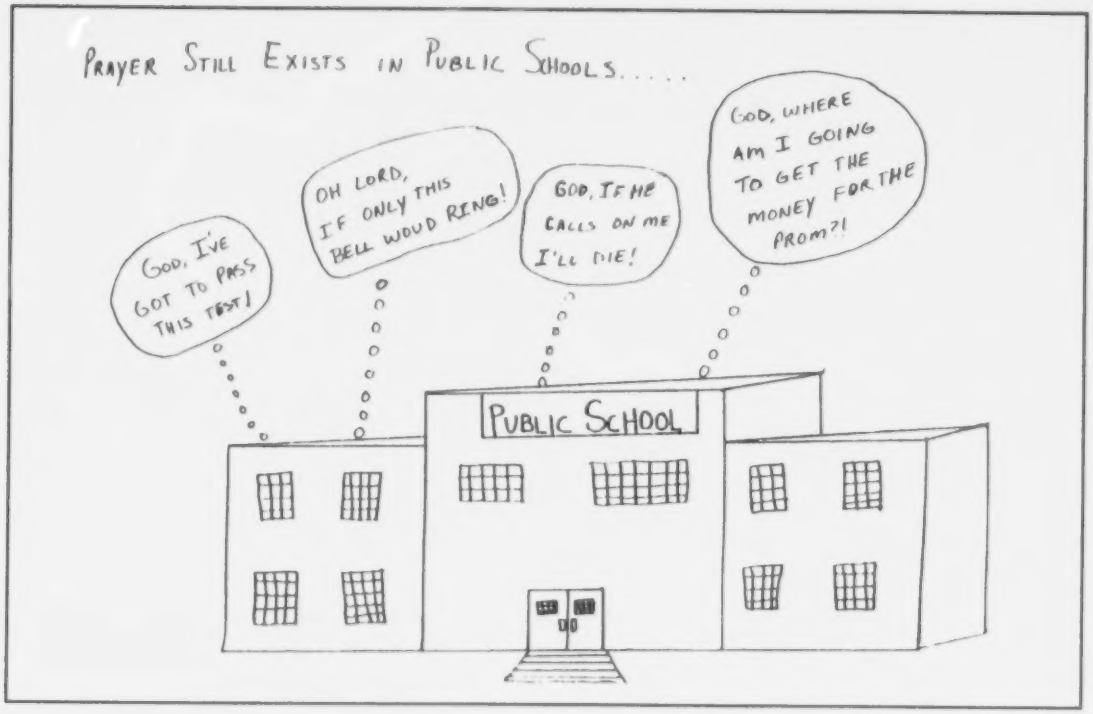
CARTOON #1



CARTOON #2



CARTOON #3


PRAYER STILL EXISTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.....
GOD, I'VE GOT TO PASS THIS TEST!
OH LORD, IF ONLY THIS BELL WOUD RING!
GOD, IF HE CALLS ON ME I'LL DIE!
GOD, WHERE AM I GOING TO GET THE MONEY FOR THE PROM?!
PUBLIC SCHOOL

CARTOON #4

CARTOON #5

Look through your newspaper for a photo of top U.S. officials or other world leaders. Read the news story that goes with the photo. Attach the photo here. Then follow the directions underneath the space for the photo.

Write a caption for the photo that clearly states the main idea in the news story. _____

_____

_____

Write a caption that makes fun of one of the people in the photo. _____

_____

_____

Write a caption that makes a serious or angry point about the news story. _____

_____

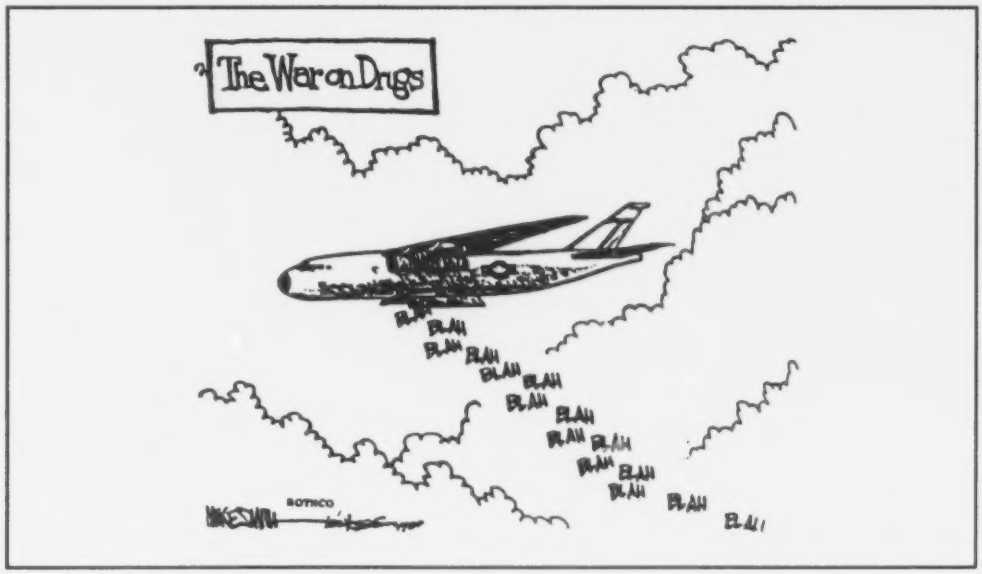
_____

As a group, share your photo-cartoons and choose the best one. _____

_____

_____

Most cartoons have words. But not all of these words are in a caption. The cartoon above has a title. But it also uses words as objects in the cartoon's picture. Look closely at this cartoon. Then answer the following questions:



What does the cartoon title alone tell you this cartoon is about? _____

_____

_____

_____

In a war, what would you expect to see dropping out of the plane? _____

_____

_____

_____

What point do you think the artist is trying to make by showing all the "blah, blah, blah's" dropping out of the plane? _____

_____

_____

_____

On a separate sheet, draw this same cartoon, but leave out the "blah, blah, blah's." Instead, write your own caption for the cartoon. Do you think your caption makes the cartoon better or worse?

Cartoons often uses famous sayings, song lyrics, advertising slogans, and other well-known phrases as captions. Choose one of the phrases listed on the left below. Use it in an editorial cartoon of your own about one of the topics listed on the right.

"Things go better with"	**the budget deficit**
"May the force be with you"	**Congress and the President**
"Truth and Consequences"	**water pollution**
"Anything Goes"	**homelessness**
"Just say no"	**abortion**
"Wheel of Fortune"	**gun control**
"Make my day"	**the Greenhouse Effect**
"Speak softly, but carry a big stick"	**TV violence**

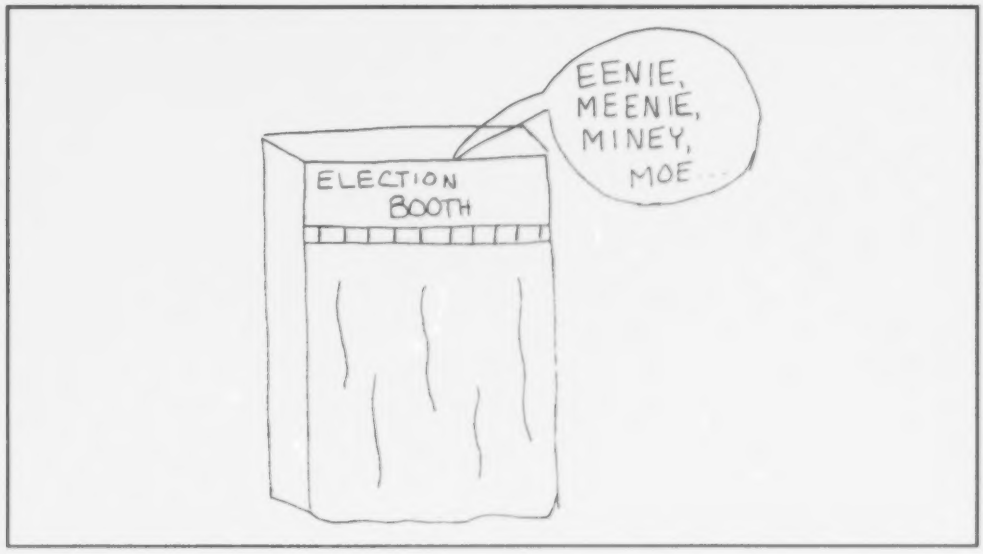
CAPTION_____

_____

_____

_____

Most cartoons use words. And sometimes the words state the point of the cartoon in a very clear way. But in the best cartoons, the words only help the other parts of the cartoon make one overall point. In that way, the reader usually has to think harder about the cartoon and decide whether or not to agree with its main point.



The student editorial cartoon above uses one very simple object - a voting booth - and a few words to make an important point. The words are "Election Booth" and a well-known rhyme. Study this cartoon closely and then answer the questions below.

What point is the cartoon making about the candidates in the election? _____

_____

_____

Make up a caption that could be used beneath the cartoon in place of the rhyme. _____

_____

_____

Do you think your caption makes the cartoon easier to understand? Why? _____

_____

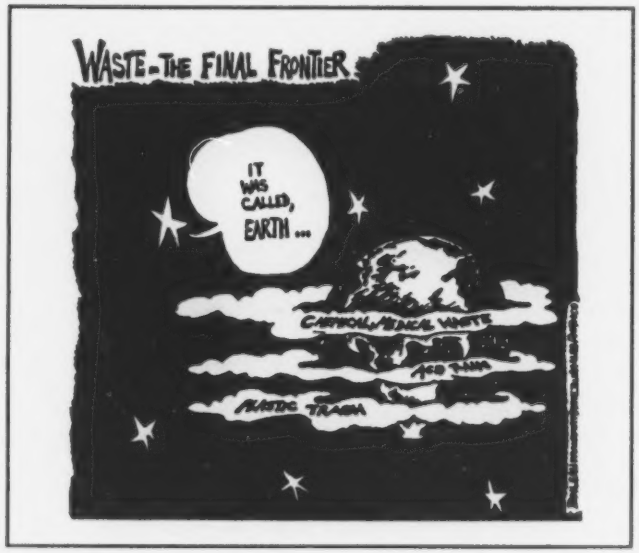
_____

Do you think your caption makes the cartoon better? Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

Not all cartoons use words. The planet Earth is the main feature in both of these cartoons. But only one has a caption and other words. Study the two cartoons carefully. Then answer the questions below.



What is the main point of the cartoon on the left? _____

_____

_____

What is the main point of the cartoon on the right? _____

_____

_____

What words, if any, would you change if you were redoing the cartoon on the left? Why? _____

_____

_____

Do you think a caption would help or hurt the cartoon on the right? _____

_____

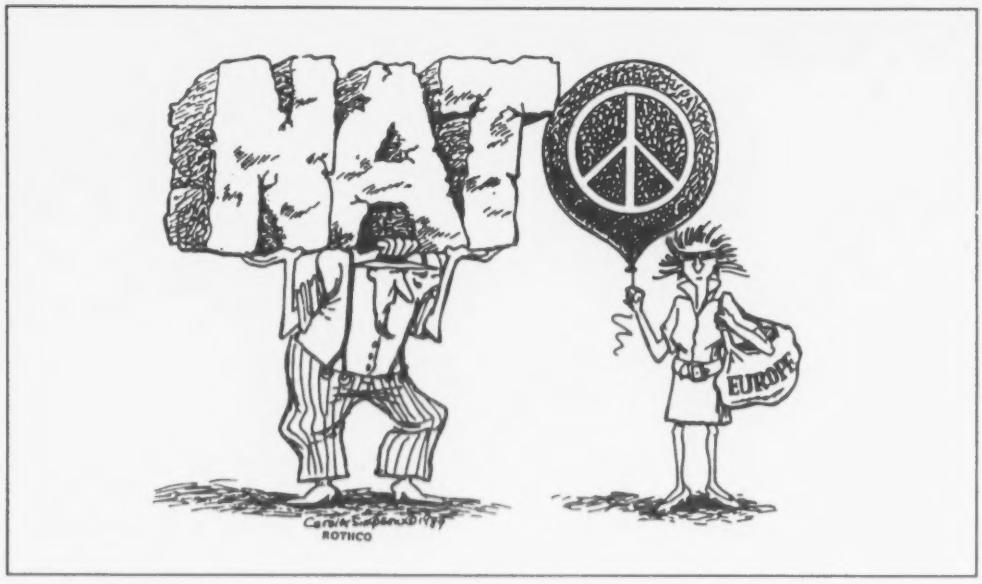
_____

Which cartoon makes its point most forcefully? Why? _____

_____

_____

The cartoon below uses just one word, the acronym "NATO," to make a very complicated point. To understand this cartoon, you need to know a good deal about NATO and about arguments between the U.S. and some Europeans over NATO policy during the Cold War, and especially in the 1980s. You also need to think about the various symbols in the cartoon and about the way the letters in "NATO" are drawn. Read more about the arguments over NATO in the 1980s. Then answer the questions beneath the cartoon.



What overall complaint does the cartoon make about the attitudes of many Europeans toward NATO? _____

_____

_____

What idea does the cartoonist get across by making the first three letters of "NATO" so thick and heavy-looking? _____

_____

_____

Why do you think the artist drew the letter "O" peace symbol on a balloon? _____

_____

_____

How does the way "Europe" is drawn help the cartoon make its point? _____

_____

_____

J.Q. PUBLIC

OBJECTIVE

The activities in this section are designed to make students more aware of some of the basic artistic techniques and rules of thumb that go into producing an effective editorial cartoon. These activities should help students avoid some of the most common difficulties young people get into when they first try to create their own editorial cartoons.

COMMENTS

Obviously, the best editorial cartoons are likely to be both artistically sophisticated and intellectually challenging. An ability to draw facial expressions, a sense of composition, an understanding of perspective, and a good feel for the use of sharp contrasts of black and white all make **Cartoon #1**, a student-drawn cartoon, highly effective.

Obviously, most students don't have the skills to create cartoons as well drawn as this one. Fortunately, they don't have to - that is, unless they plan to make a career of editorial cartooning. To enjoy, understand, and draw effective editorial cartoons, students only need to keep a few points in mind.

Perhaps the most important of these points is to avoid cluttering up a cartoon with too many elements. **Cartoon #2**, another student cartoon, is a good example of a simple cartoon that makes a powerful statement. This is a well-drawn cartoon, but its effectiveness is really a result of its stark simplicity more than anything else.

Cartoon #3 is not at all sophisticated in an artistic sense. But it does make a clever comment about the economic rivalry between the U.S. and Japan. The student who drew this cartoon unified it both artistically and conceptually with the bombs on the left and the cars on the right. This conveys in an economical way, without words, the idea that trade might be a form of war by other means. Again, all the words and visual elements in the cartoon work together to make a single point.

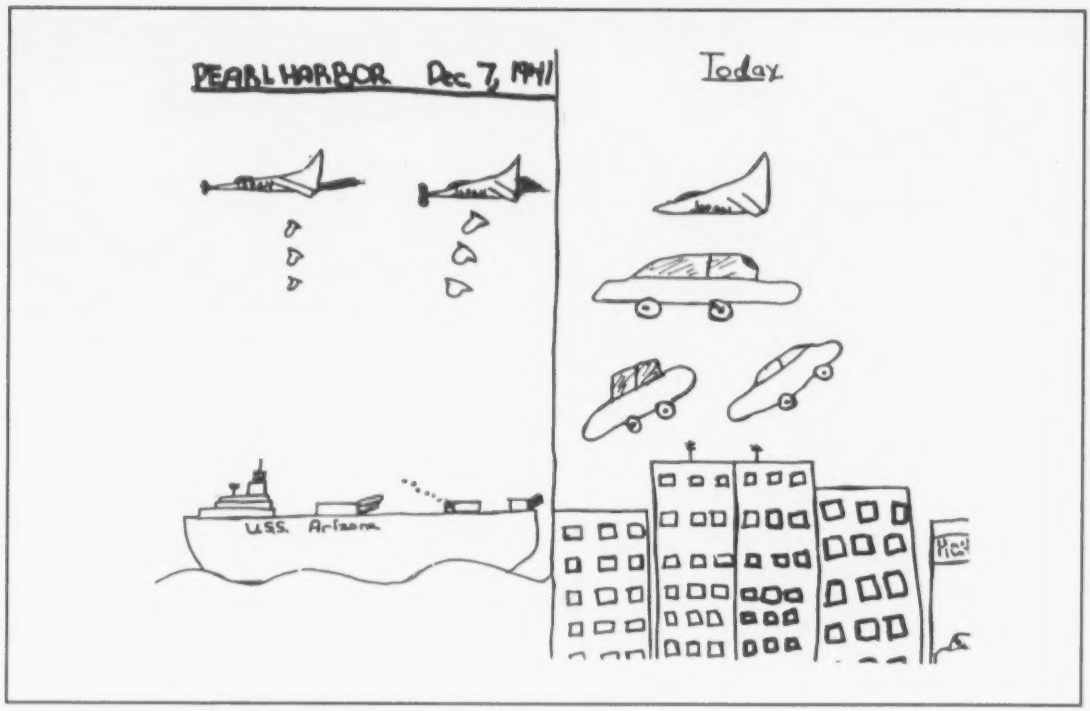
Cartoon #4, another student-drawn cartoon, is also simple and unified. But the words aren't clear. The ironic humor of the cartoon's point could be lost on readers as they struggle to make out the words.

This cartoon illustrates one of the following simple rules of thumb about drawing that students should keep in mind as they sit down to create their own cartoons:

- *Sketch first drafts of a cartoon lightly in pencil.*
- *Use pen or dark pencils for the final draft.*
- *Heavier and cleaner lines are usually preferable.*
- *Avoid clutter unless it is essential to the cartoon's point or meaning.*
- *Make sure the most important visual features stand out in some way.*
- *Keep objects in the correct proportions - exaggerate for a reason, but don't overdo it.*
- *Avoid too many words, and make sure the words are big enough and legible enough.*
- *Keep action logical (remember people tend to "read" cartoons from left to right).*

CARTOON #1

CARTOON #2



CARTOON #3

CARTOON #4

The sizes and shapes of all the objects in a cartoon should help make clear what that cartoon is about. Also all the words should be clear. Look through recent newspapers and cut out a number of editorial cartoons. Pick the one you think is drawn best. Attach it in the space below. Then answer the questions beneath it.

What is the cartoon about? _____

Are the words in it clearly written? _____

What is the most important part of the cartoon? _____

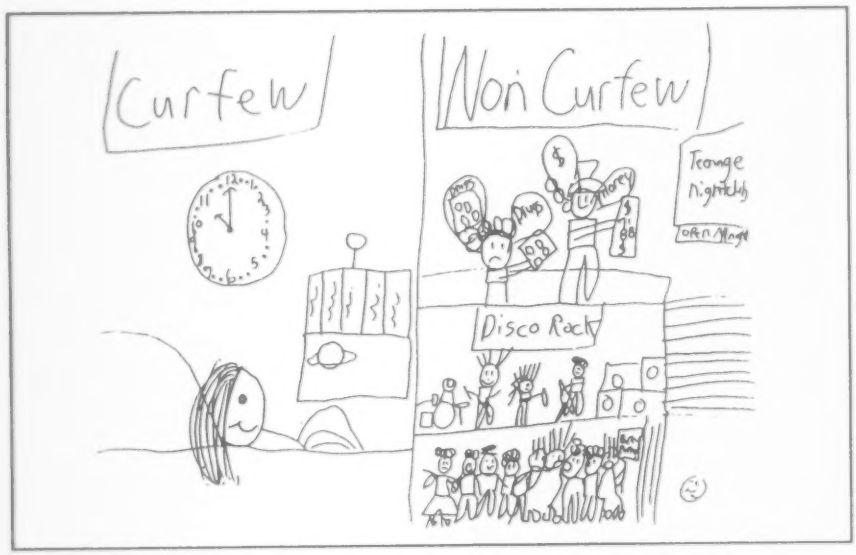
What do you like most about the way the cartoon is drawn? _____

What parts, if any, would you change if you were drawing this cartoon? _____

This student-drawn cartoon is about students who are not learning enough in school. Most people who see this cartoon like it. But many of them say it is hard to understand at first. They say some parts are drawn well, but others are not. And they say it is not clear what parts of the cartoon the artist wants us to pay attention to most.

Try to make this cartoon better by redrawing it. Change the size or shape of its parts in any way you think best. You may want to shade the parts differently. Or you may decide to make the lines thinner or thicker. You could leave out some words, add others, or change the way the words are printed to make them clearer. Try to make some parts of the cartoon stand out more than they do now. Trace over the parts you wish to keep as they are.

This cartoon does make a single point about a topic in the news - teenage curfews. The cartoon is in favor of such curfews. But it isn't easy to see that at first. Look closely at the cartoon and then answer the following questions:



What big difference do you see between the left and right halves of the cartoon? _____

_____

_____

What parts of the cartoon help make the point that curfews are a good idea? _____

_____

_____

What parts of the cartoon could be left out? _____

_____

_____

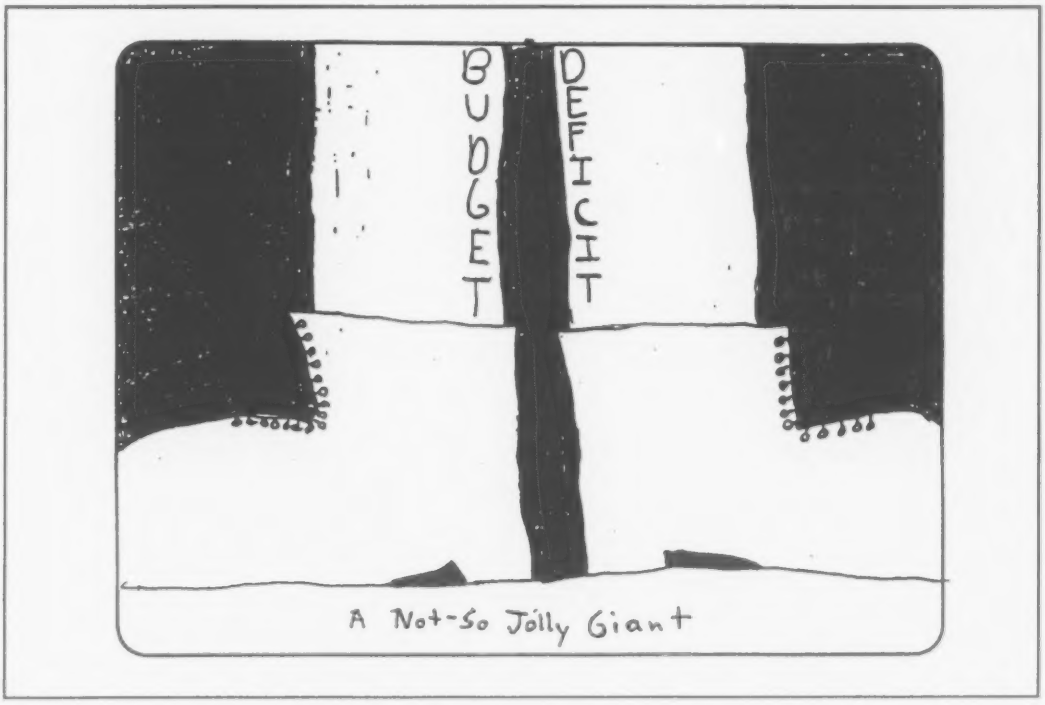
What words - if any - would you change, leave out, or add? _____

_____

_____

On a separate sheet of paper, redraw this cartoon to help make it better.

In some ways, this is a very simply drawn student editorial cartoon. But many people who see this cartoon say it makes a strong point about one big problem. Study the cartoon closely. Then answer the questions below.



In a sentence, explain what the budget deficit is. _____

_____

_____

Why are the words "A Not-So Jolly Giant" a good title for a cartoon about the budget deficit? _____

_____

_____

Would it have helped or hurt the cartoon to show the entire giant, not just its feet? Why? _____

_____

_____

Would it have helped or hurt the cartoon to leave the background white instead of black? Why? _____

_____

_____

What else do you like or dislike about this cartoon? _____

_____

_____

Most people see this cartoon as a strong expression of outrage at medical waste washing ashore on some of the nation's beaches. And yet, it uses no words and makes no direct statement about the problem. It achieves its impact artistically. Study it closely. Then answer the following:

How does the position the little boy is in add to the emotion the cartoon arouses? _____

_____

_____

Would it have helped or hurt the cartoon if more than a single syringe were shown on the beach? Why? _____

_____

_____

In what way does the lone sea gull add to the cartoon's impact? _____

_____

_____

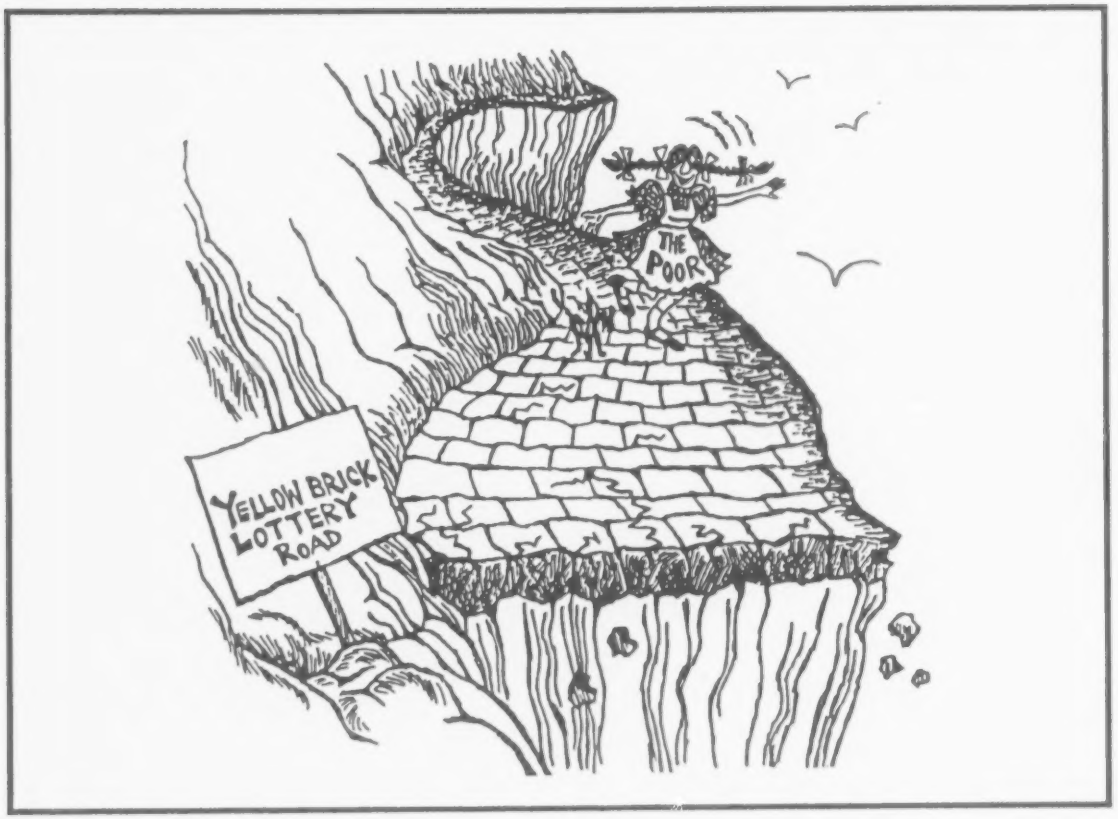
In what way does the all-white background help enhance the cartoon's impact? _____

_____

_____

No matter how well-drawn a cartoon is, it must also be designed well. That is, each item in the cartoon should create some kind of visual balance, the items should seem related in a logical sequence or order, there should be a sense of unity - even when one item stands out among the others. Look at this cartoon. Then in a brief paragraph below, explain what specific features in the cartoon help it attain balance, a sense of logical order, and unity.

The Great Escape—Part I



LITERARY & HISTORICAL REFERENCES

OBJECTIVE

The activities in this section are designed to make students aware of the wide range of historical, literary, and cultural materials cartoonists draw on for symbols and analogies, and to explain why these materials often provide the most powerful and economical images cartoons employ.

COMMENTS

As members of the same culture, we all share many common myths and symbols. In more traditional societies, these myths and symbols are transmitted primarily by a formal religious system. In our society, the sources are much more diverse - history, literature, fairy tales, movies, television, even advertising.

Editorial cartoonists draw on all these sources for the images and ideas in their cartoons. In each case, an analogy is made between the symbol, image, or myth in the cartoon and some present-day issue or event.

A famous phrase, an historical event, a myth, or a symbol can concisely capture our understanding about the past and our most strongly held beliefs and values. As an example, take the phrase "no taxation without representation," which comes from the era of the American Revolution. This single phrase has a kind of mythic power because it expresses the deeply held views most Americans have about their nation's past and its peculiar strengths. It is this widely shared understanding that Dick Locher draws on in **Cartoon #1**. He knows that his audience will understand immediately the ironic implications of the wording change he makes in that famous phrase.

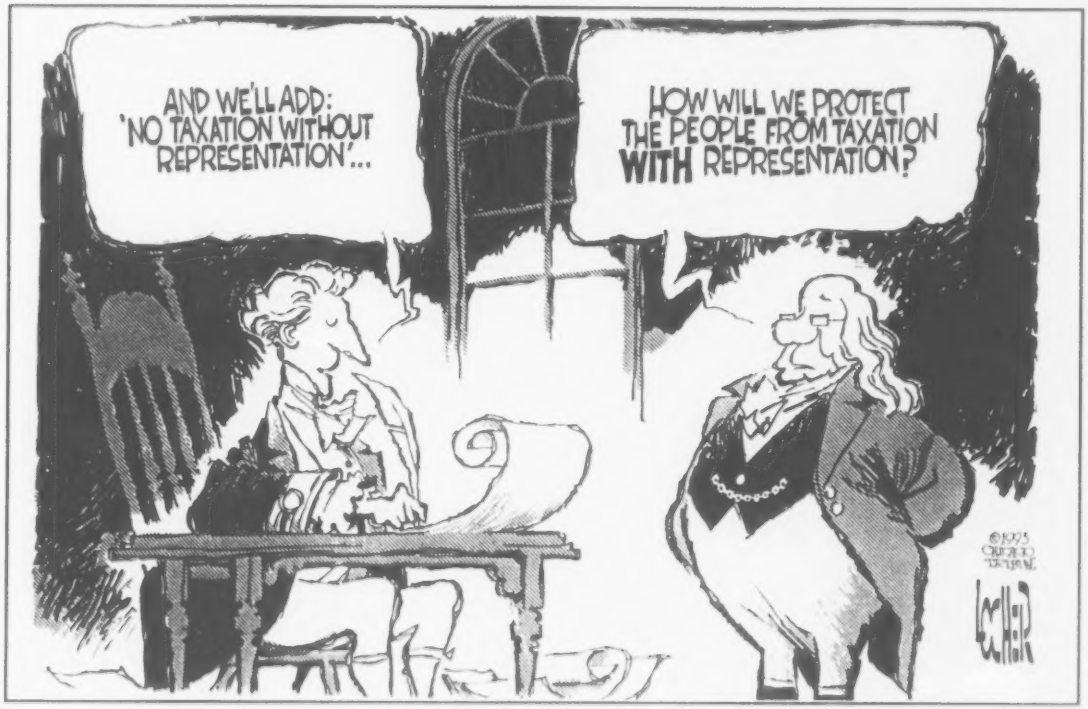
Cartoon #2 also sparks this kind of immediate comprehension. It seeks to convey the idea that racial hatred is always present and often ready to re-emerge in new forms. Nothing symbolizes such hatred more effectively than the Nazi swastika. Over the years, thousands of cartoons have used this symbol for its dramatic effect. As with a phrase like "no taxation without representation, it concentrates a great deal of meaning into a single cartoon element.

In a way, that's the real value of symbols, events or images drawn from literature, history, and other sources. They are economizing devices. They make it possible to say a great deal, tease the reader with all sorts of implied parallels, without giving away so much information as to become obvious.

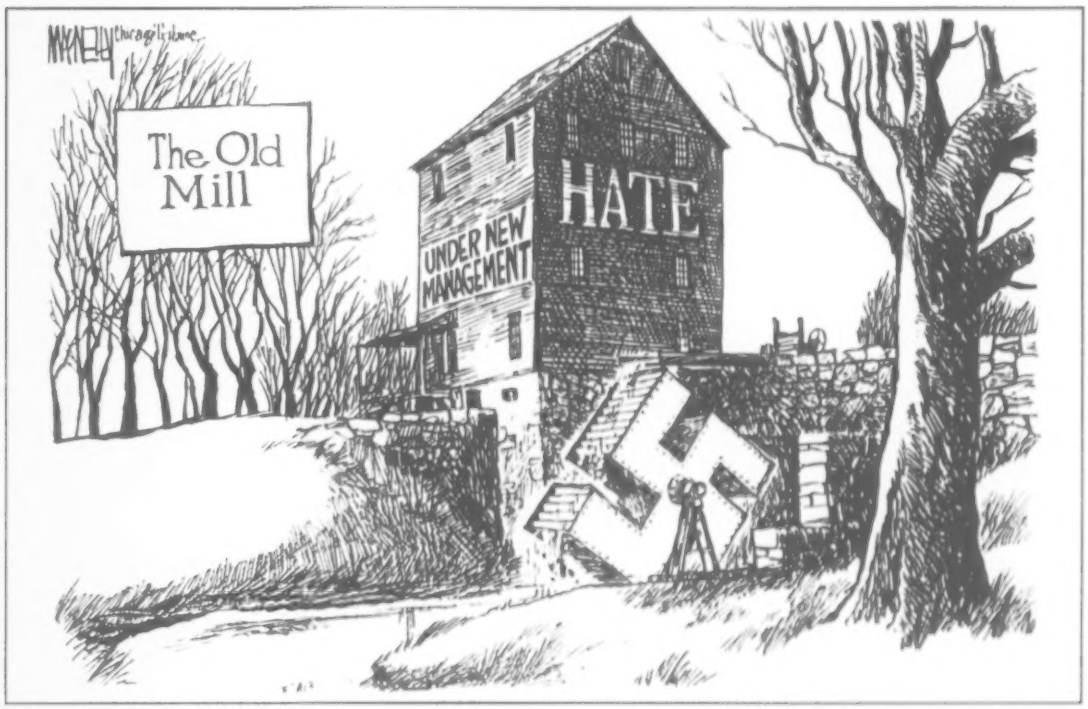
Of course, to make such references work, the cartoonist must use them carefully. It's all too easy to misuse an analogy, either by distorting and over-simplifying a past episode, or by misapplying its "lesson" to a present-day event that differs substantially from the past episode. Of course, the critical analysis of such "false analogies" can itself be a valuable exercise for students.

The cartoonist must also be sure the myth or historical episode used is widely known and understood. Millions of people know the story of "The Wizard of Oz." But to understand the point it helps make in **Cartoon #3**, a reader would have to appreciate the significance of the story in a fairly sophisticated way. **Cartoon #4**, by Dick Locher, requires some knowledge of classical history and mythology, or at least a familiarity with the myth of Diogenes, who wandered the land in search of an honest man.

The point here is that the cartoonist must not only be sure of how to use any particular historical, literary, or other reference; he or she must also have a good sense of how widely shared and understood that reference is.


AND WE'LL ADD: 'NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION'...
HOW WILL WE PROTECT THE PEOPLE FROM TAXATION WITH REPRESENTATION?

CARTOON #1



CARTOON #2

CARTOON #3

CARTOON #4

Editorial cartoons often use famous people from history - or characters from the Bible, other books, or even movies. Below is a list of a few of these people or characters.

Abraham Lincoln
Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader
George Washington
Superman
Noah and his ark
King Kong
Little Red Riding Hood

Look through your newspaper for stories about important people in the news. Below, list two of these people. Write the name of each person below. And in the space next to the name, draw a picture of that person as one of the figures in the list above.

NEWSNAME #1

_____

NEWSNAME #2

_____

This cartoon uses the main figure in a group of cigarette ads to make a strong point about the dangers of smoking. Look through your newspaper or other magazines for advertisements. Use one of these ads for ideas for an editorial cartoon of your own. Draw your cartoon in the space for it below. You may trace the parts of the ad you wish to use — but you may also change the ad in any way you wish. Attach your ad to this sheet.

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Many cartoons use events from history as a way to make a point about some current problem or event in the news. This cartoon is about a problem in our nation today. But to understand the cartoon, you need to know something about the historical event referred to in it. Study the cartoon and then answer the following questions:

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE, HUH? IT'S A LOT OF LAND BUT I GUESS IT COULD ALWAYS BE USED AS FUTURE DUMP SITES FOR THE EASTERN STATES.

What President made the Louisiana Purchase, and in what year did he make it? _____

_____

_____

From what nation did the U.S. buy the lands included in the Louisiana Purchase? _____

_____

_____

What future states were formed from this territory? _____

_____

_____

What point do you think this cartoon is making? _____

_____

_____

How does the use of the Louisiana Purchase in this cartoon help it to make its point more forcefully?

_____

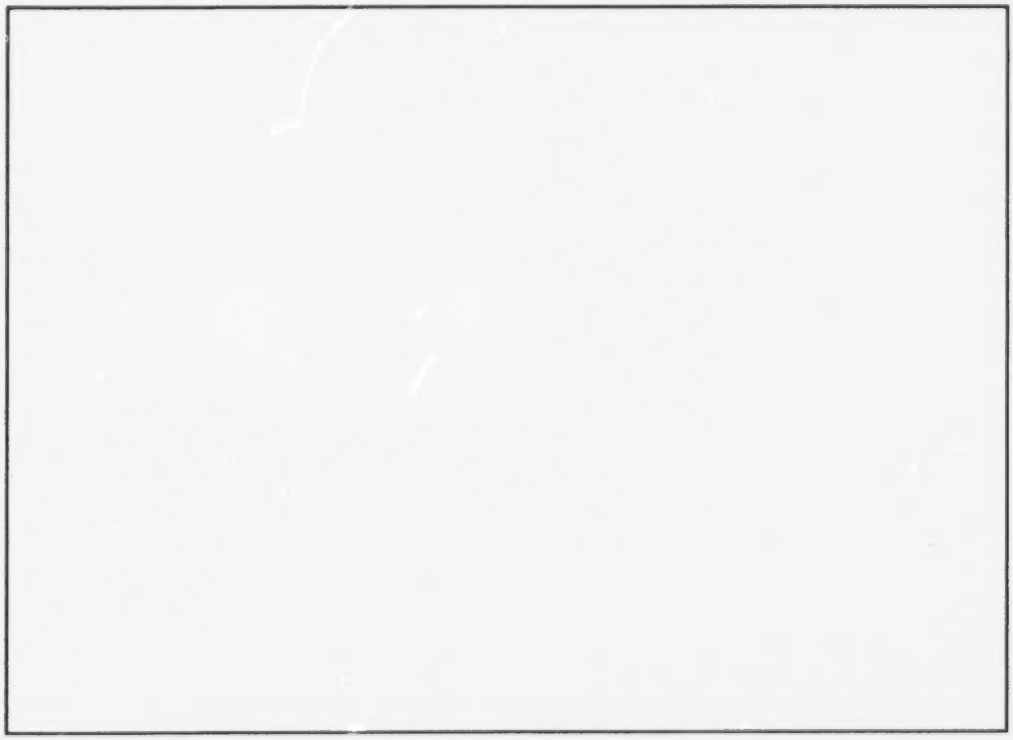
_____

_____

Cartoons often use characters in books or movies to stand for people in the news today. Or they copy scenes from those books or movies. Below are a list of well-known books and movies, or characters from books and movies.

Huckleberry Finn
The Terminator
Indiana Jones
E.T.
Robinson Crusoe
Tale of Two Cities
Star Wars
Dr. Jekell and Mr. Hyde
Sherlock Holmes

Find an editorial or a news story about some big argument Americans are having now. Decide what your opinion is about the problem and the way important officials or other leaders are dealing with it. Then draw your own cartoon about this problem in the space below, using one of the characters or a scene from one of the books or movies listed here.



In this Jeff MacNelly cartoon, the figure of Neville Chamberlain is used to make a pointed attack on NATO's policy toward the civil war in Bosnia. Study the cartoon and answer these questions about it:

Briefly sum up the nature of the conflict in Bosnia. Explain why the tank in this cartoon is labeled Serbia. _____

_____

_____

Identify Neville Chamberlain and explain briefly the impact his diplomatic efforts had on European history in the late 1930s. _____

_____

_____

What point is the cartoon making, and how does the figure of Neville Chamberlain help it to make that point? _____

_____

_____

"One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

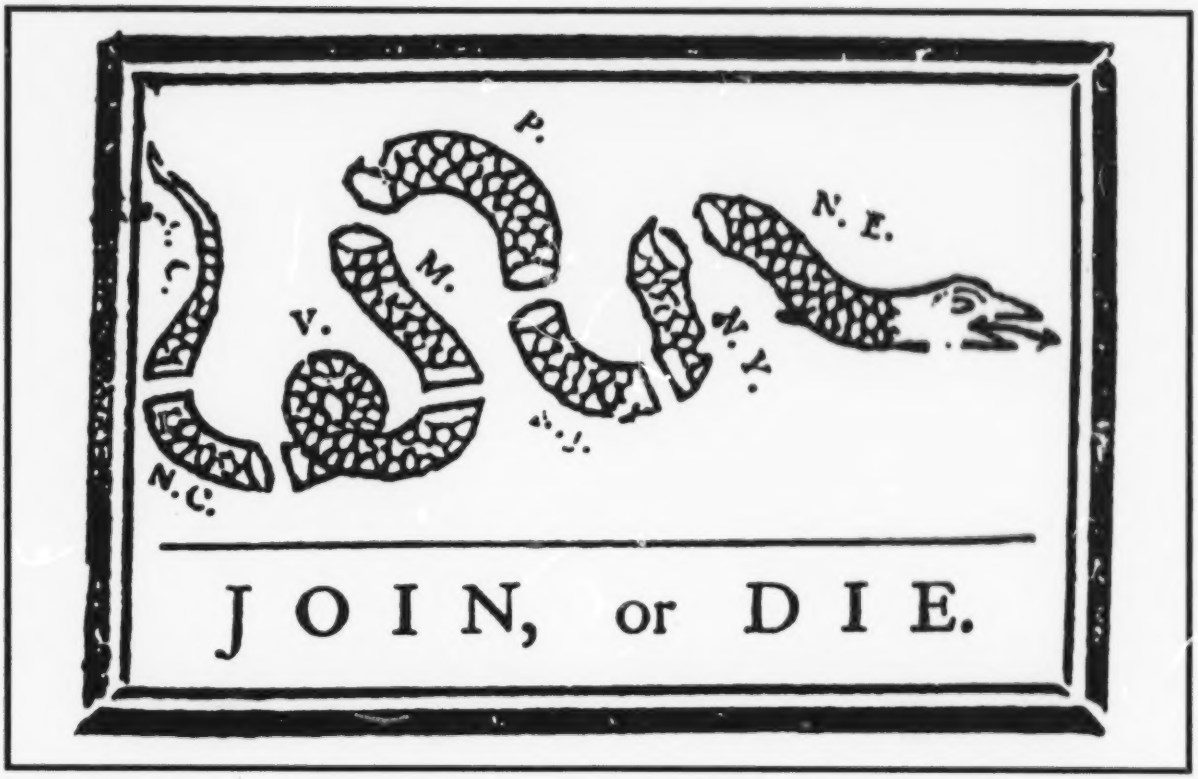
"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

"Of the people, by the people, for the people."

"I shall return."

"This was their finest hour."

Use one of these famous quotations as a caption or title for a cartoon about some current issue in the news. Draw your cartoon in the space provided.


P.
N. E.
S. C.
M.
V.
N. Y.
N. J.
N. C.
JOIN, or DIE.

OBJECTIVE

The activities in this section are designed to teach students to appreciate editorial cartoons as valuable sources of information about earlier periods of history. Students should come to see that the editorial cartoon, as a popular art form with mass appeal, often evokes the spirit or temper of a time better than many other primary historical sources.

COMMENTS

Editorial cartoons were around even before the founding of the republic, as **Cartoon #1** by Benjamin Franklin makes clear.

It's safe to say that no artist draws a cartoon with the expectation that it will survive and be of lasting historical interest. Cartoons are comments on the passing scene. They are meant to affect public debate about an issue while that issue is still alive and unsettled. And yet this very fact is what makes editorial cartoons so valuable as historical documents. They are a unique window into a past moment in time as it was lived by the participants.

As such, editorial cartoons from the past are often very hard to interpret. They assume on the part of the public, a fund of background knowledge that is sure to fade or alter rapidly over time. As a result, they are often a kind of modern-day hieroglyphics, riddles that can only be solved by research and historical detective work.

Think, for example, of the kinds of background knowledge a student would have to acquire in order to correctly explain all the nuances in **Cartoon #2** - drawn by the late nineteenth century cartoonist Frederick Opper. This cartoon makes a comment on President Grover Cleveland and his intentions to cut the highly protective tariff of his day.

As experts on the editorial cartoon, your students should now be in a position to do the kind of detective work required to explain such cartoons. And this could be an enjoyable way to unravel all sorts of mysteries about the past debates and controversies that have shaped our republic.

CARTOON #1

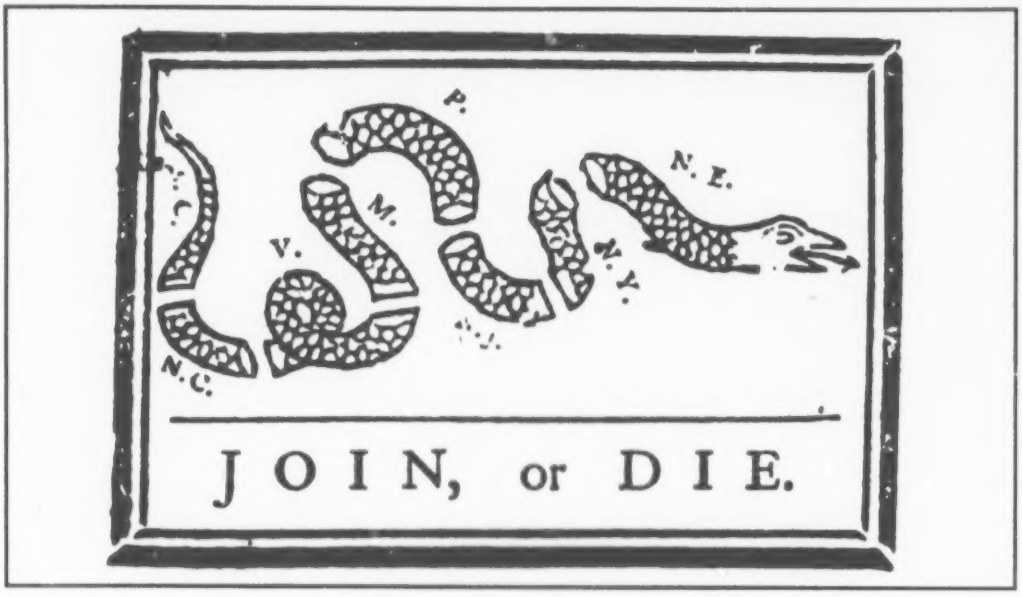
DOCTOR CLEVELAND'S PATIENTS.
"Uncle Sam (to Civil Service Reform) — Don't cry, my child, he'll look after you presently. Your brother needs attention more than you do"

CARTOON #2

For many years, the figure of Uncle Sam has been used in editorial cartoons to stand for the United States. Above are three examples of Uncle Sam from cartoons in the past. What do you think the Uncle Sam of the future might look like? Use the space below to draw your own Uncle Sam of the year 2000.

Over the next two weeks, collect all the editorial cartoons you can find. Divide them into two lists. Make one list for the cartoons that do NOT mention people or events from past history. Make another list for those that DO mention people or events from past history. Which list is longer?

Choose one cartoon that uses some person or event from our nation's history. Attach that cartoon in the space below. Read more about the people or events in history the cartoon shows. Now, in a sentence or two, explain what the cartoon is about and why it uses people or events from past history.



This famous cartoon was drawn by Benjamin Franklin in 1754. Using history textbooks, encyclopedias, or other sources, learn more about Benjamin Franklin and about what was happening in the British colonies of North America in that year. Based on your reading, answer the following questions:

What does each piece of the snake stand for? _____

_____

_____

Why did Franklin show this snake as divided into pieces? _____

_____

_____

What specific events do you think he had in mind when he drew this cartoon? _____

_____

_____

What point is the cartoon trying to make? _____

_____

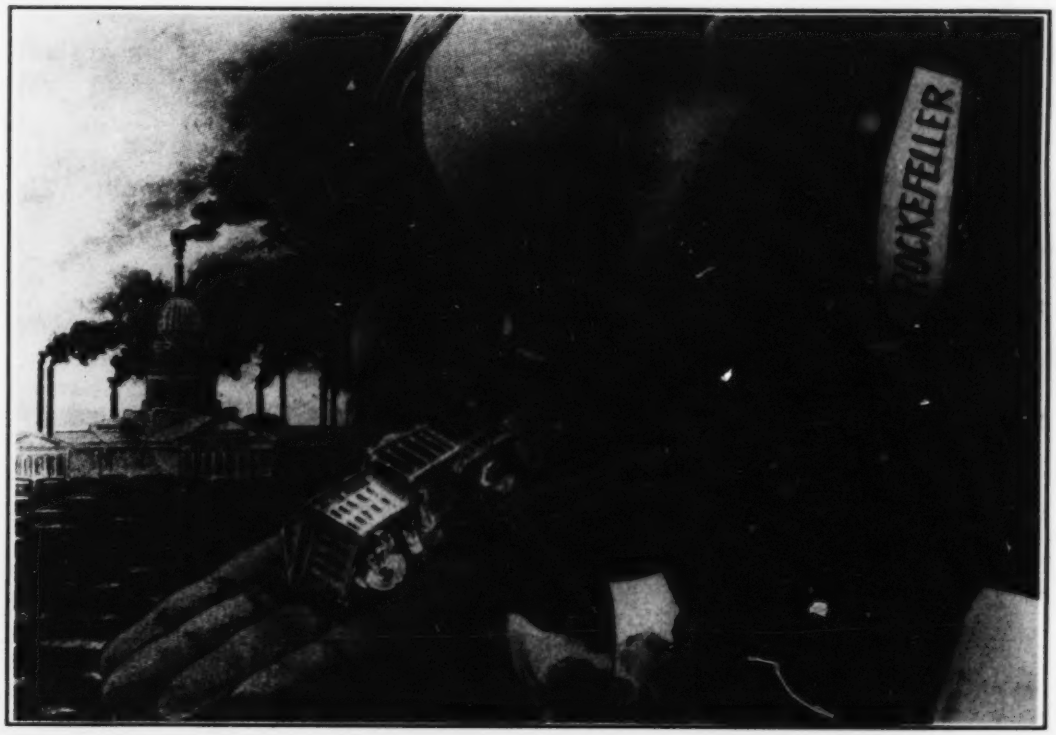
_____

The abolition of slavery
The right of women to vote
Child labor
America's decision to enter World War One
Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal"

Above is a list of big issues Americans have argued about at one time or another in the past. Use history textbooks and other sources to learn more about one of these big arguments. Pretend you are an editorial cartoonist at the time that argument was taking place. In the space below, draw your own editorial cartoon about that argument.

This famous cartoon by David Low is about a very important event in 1939. Read history textbooks or encyclopedia articles to learn more about that famous event. Then in a brief paragraph, explain the cartoon. In your explanation, be sure to answer this question: Why do the words attributed to the two figures in the cartoon make it so heavily ironic?

This cartoon from the late 1800s comments on the relationship between economic and political power. Read more about the period of the late 1800s. Based on your reading, explain the cartoon. Do you think this cartoon is still relevant to problems in our political system today? Why or why not?



"The Trust Giant's Point of View"

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The Herb Block Gallery. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968.

BUTT, WILLIAM S., ED.
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CAKET, COLIN.
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The Pen, Not the Sword. Nashville: Aurora, 1970.

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Cartoon History of Foreign Policy, 1776-1976. New York: William Morrow, 1975.

GOULD, ANN, ED.
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HERRIMAN, GEORGE.
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KELLY, WALT.
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———.
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_____.
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PAINE, ALBERT B.
Thomas Nast. New York: Chelsea House, 1980.

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How to Draw and Sell Cartoons. Cincinnati: North Light, 1985. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959.